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Lawlors ,Loughton Design & Access Statement

229-DA-01

October 2014

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1. Introduction

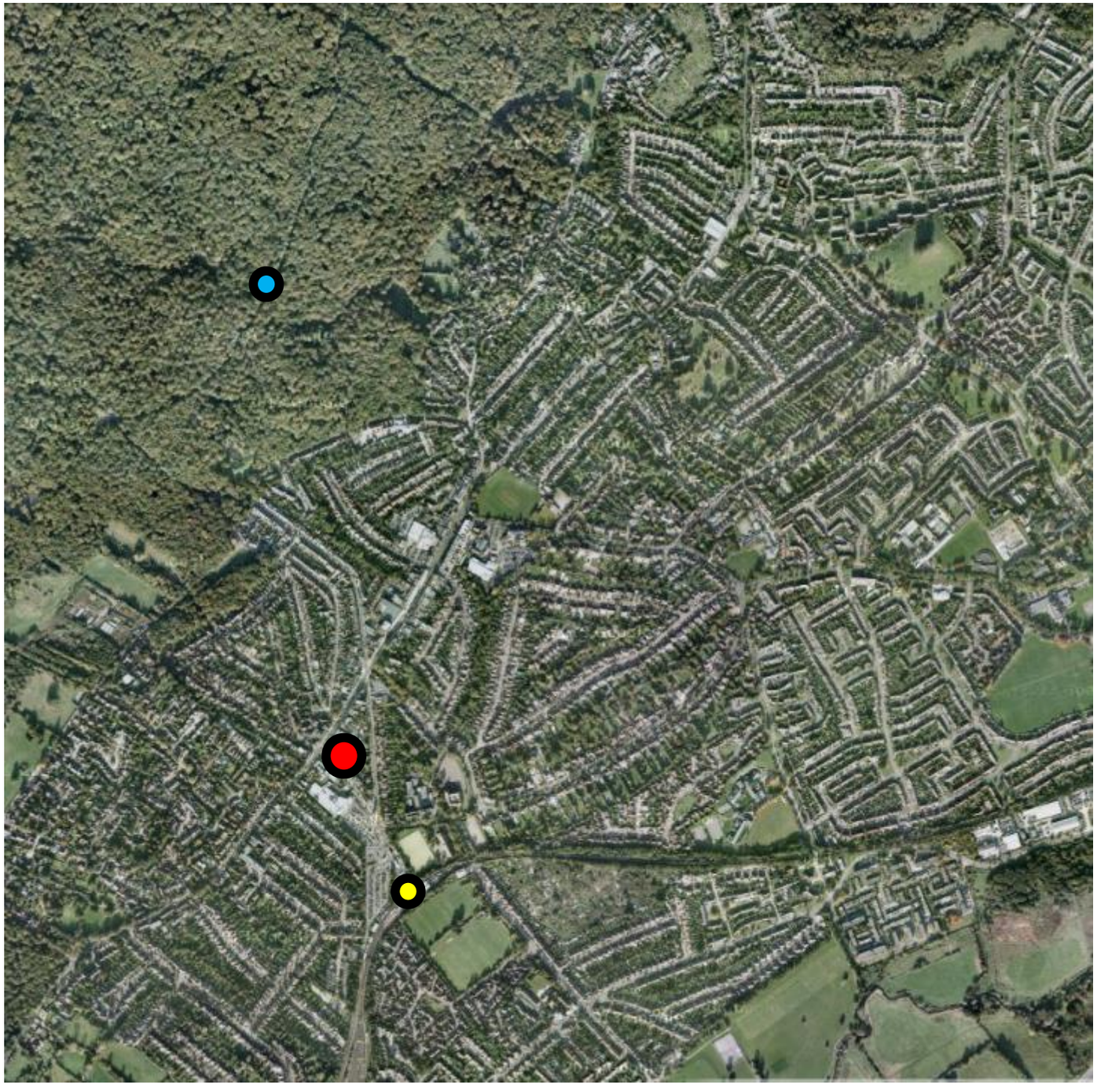
The proposal for 165 High Road consists of the following:

The demolition of the existing outbuilding and small section of existing stair well to the rear.

The erection of a 5 storey building to the rear of the site

The refurbishment and revitalisation of the existing building to the front of the property.

Our proposal seeks to enhance the previously approved scheme (EPF/2081/12) with a design that we believe justifies the prominent position within Loughton. Our proposals also include adding a roof top extension to the front building, which will start and end the shopping parade with gusto. Please note that the existing building to the front of the site will remain insitu and its existing accommodation maintained. This consists of ground floor commercial use, first floor office accommodation and 4 studio apartments to the second floor.



Aerial photograph of Loughton

Loughton Station

Epping Forest

Site Location

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2. Pre-Application Advice

We have had 2 pre application meetings regarding the proposal.

Following our first pre application discussion and meeting with Mr Solon and Mrs Tovey, we revised our proposals in line with their advice and comments. It was identified during the meeting that the site is a development site and agreed that it would benefit from redevelopment.

We originally sought a 7 storey building on the site and following conversations reduced this to 6 storeys. However, following our meeting with the planning officers it was considered they could not support an application for 6 storeys but could however, support a proposal for 5 storeys subject to a suitable design. It was deemed by officers that this height would not be excessive when viewed from the street scene or from the rear of the building as highlighted in our contextual model.

Following the first meeting, a great deal of consideration and design work was carried out. Subsequently we devised a proposal which retains the building to the front with a roof extension to total 4 storeys and a new building at the rear of the site incorporating 5 storeys. By retaining the height of 4 storeys (from the approved scheme EPF/2081/12) to the front of the site, it will establish an architectural language between the refurbished existing building and our proposed new building to the rear by introducing a stepped rhythm.

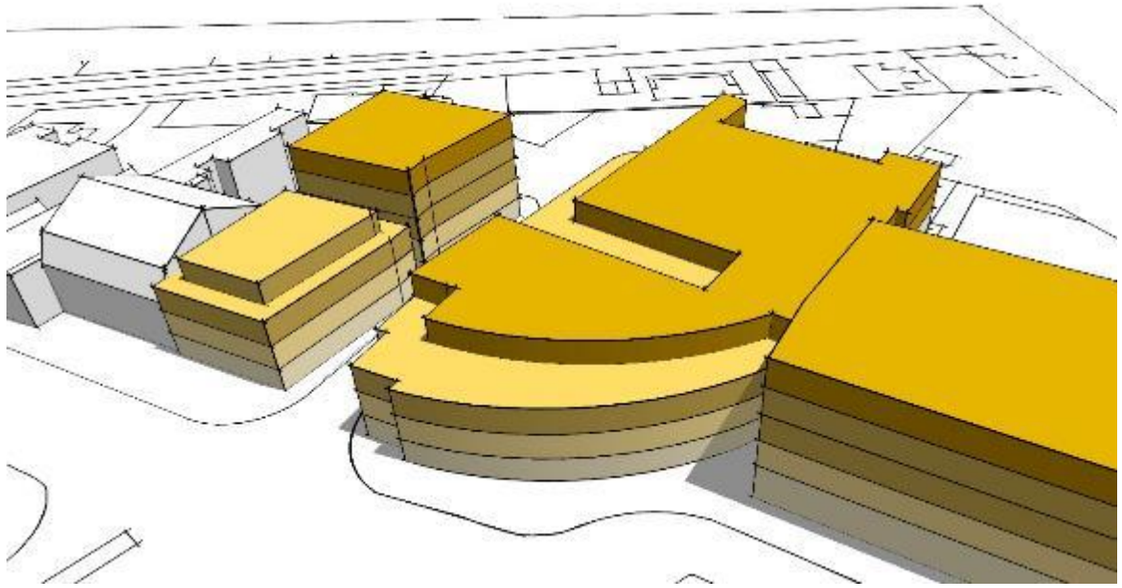
Our second pre application submission was made with the above alterations and in all the comments received by letter on the 5th August 2014 were positive. It was considered by the Council that the massing was in context with Marks and Spencers and its scale and design related well to its location. The proposal would significantly improve the quality of the footway between the high street and the car park to the rear and improve surveillance with the creation of an active rear frontage.

The Council considered there would be no significant loss of light and outlook to surrounding properties and the level of proposed accommodation was good. The council did comment on the entrance into the apartments and had concerns it was narrow and unwelcoming. Further work has been carried out on this and we have widened the entrance

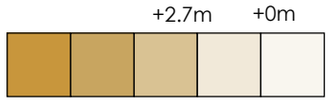
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Proposed addition to existing massing



Massing in context of adjacent buildings



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3. Site Description

The site measures approximately 445m^2 and sits in a prominent position as you enter Loughton and is surrounded by an eclectic mix of properties to the left of the site and to the right some larger buildings (including the local Marks & Spencer) with a range of differing roof lines of different styles.

Our design proposals have been developed to make reference to the traditional materials visible along the parade, whilst conforming with the modern language of the adjacent Marks & Spencer building, built circa 2008/2009.



View from across the High Road looking at the site



Aerial photograph of the site (indicative site boundary shown)

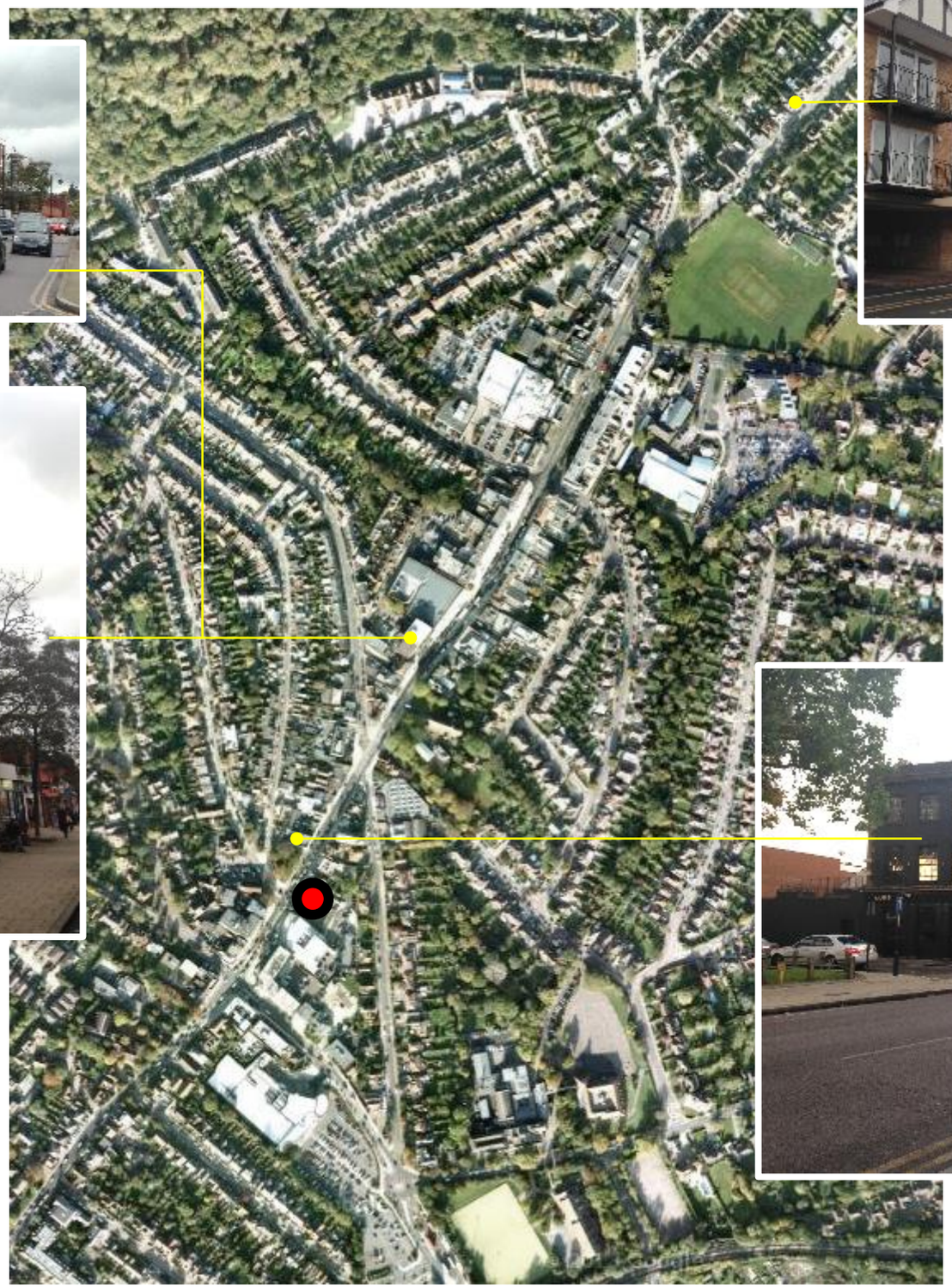
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3. Site Description









The image below shows the prominent existing "Luxe" building opposite the application site.



There are a number of recent residential developments that have been constructed along the High Road which sit hand in hand within the existing street scene. This mix of residential and commercial creates continual footfall which is essential to the success of local businesses in the area.

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4. Site Photographs



View of frontage to the site



View of side access for the Marks & Spencer Car Park



View of rear of existing front building from within the existing site



Panoramic view of the High Road, illustrating context of higher built forms within close proximity of site

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4. Site Photographs



View of rear of office block on corner of High Road



View of rear of Marks & Spencer from corner office block car park



View along High Road from approach into Loughton

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5. Design Proposals

Firstly we are seeking to refurbish the building to the front of the property. This building currently contains Lawlors Estate Agents and Multiyork on the ground floor. The first floor is used as offices and the second floor contains 4 studio flats. All will remain untouched.

To bring this building up to date and to improve upon its appearance, we intend to re-clad the existing building with a rendered wrap, encasing the panels of existing brickwork. We will also be installing replacement windows, together with a proposed new 4th storey containing 2 x 1 bedroom apartments.

To the rear of the site would be a new building containing 12 apartments over 5 floors. This will contain a mix of 8 x 1 bed apartments and 4 x 2 bed apartments. All of the apartments in the rear block will also have balconies from the main living space.

To the side of the development, abutting the neighbouring properties, a light well has been created to maximise natural light and step away from the neighbouring properties. On the ground floor of the new building will be a large office space, enabling Lawlors to expand their current offices and subsequently the business, providing further employment and benefits to local shops, cafes and restaurants.

Our overall footprint will be similar in size to the current approved scheme, but with a separation between the two built forms, with particular attention being given to their form and appearance. The massing has been carefully developed to respond to the surrounding context, which can be seen on the development/massing models in section 2.

The location of the site presents a perfect opportunity to create an architectural statement, encouraging well designed architecture to the High Road and promoting a 'new' road philosophy to the current access to the Marks & Spencer car park. This project could serve as a catalyst for other local development, which in turn would secure the vitality of the High Road, ensuring that further business and trade is not lost to London.



Existing view from High Road



Proposed view from High Road

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6. Assessment of Design Proposals

This part of the submission will look at the following areas of the proposal:

6.1 - Design & Appearance
6.2 - Impact Upon Neighbouring Properties
6.3 - Standard of Accommodation
6.4 - Car Parking and Highways Issues



Existing view from the rear of the site



Proposed view from the rear of the site showing the new active frontage

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6. Assessment of Design Proposals

6.1 - **Design & Appearance**

A deliberate palette of materials has been carefully chosen to not only respond to the surrounding buildings but to create a development that will provide precedent for high quality design that future developments in the area will hopefully aspire to, thus promoting a higher standard of development along the High Road.

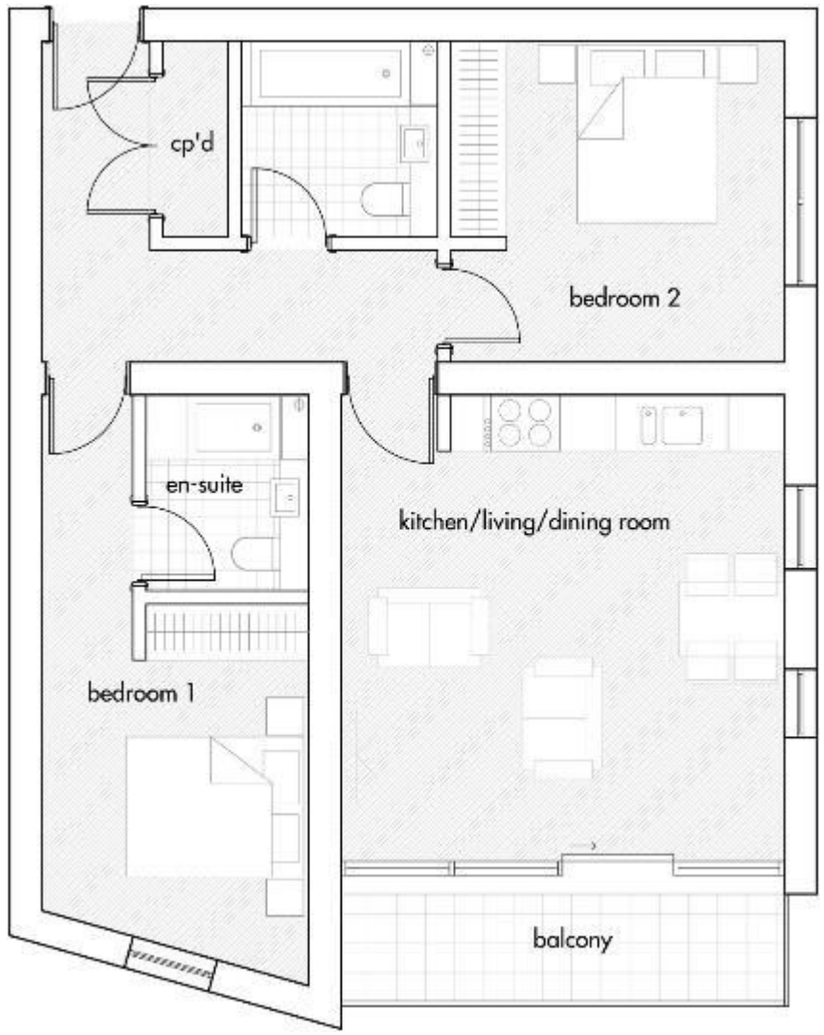
The addition of a roof extension to the existing building provides a visual link between the parade and the proposed new building at the rear of the site. This creates a rhythm to the street scene. As referred to earlier, the extension to the existing front building has already been granted permission through application EPF/2081/12.

The High Road is characterised by having many different architectural styles which in itself creates an interesting and inspiring high street. There are however pockets of developments that could be vastly improved and developed into something far more complementary, as is the situation with the site in question.

6.2 - **Impact Upon Neighbouring Properties**

The site is in a prominent position on the corner of the access road to Marks & Spencer and therefore, in our opinion deserves a far more significant pair of buildings with greater design and detailing to what has previously been approved. The overall design will have a positive impact upon surrounding buildings and Loughton town centre as a whole thus enhancing the vitality and viability of local businesses.

Careful consideration has been made to the placement of windows and balconies to consider not only overlooking to surrounding properties but to create elevational relief. The primary focus has been to ensure that the new development is not overpowering or monolithic, yet at the same time able to stand by itself. To protect neighbouring privacy any overlooking windows are set far enough away to prevent any



Part floor plan showing generous accommodation to first/second/third/fourth floor apartment @ 72sqm (apt. 2,5,8 & 11)

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6. Assessment of Design Proposals

6.3 - **Standard of Accommodation**

Commercial space is significantly increased for Lawlors Estate Agents to expand their local business. There is a healthy mix of residential units and the distribution of accommodation is as follows:

Studio Apartment Size: 30-34m^2
1 Bed Apartments average size: 52m^2.
2 bed Apartments average size: 72m^2.

As demonstrated in the detailed floor plans, the standard of accommodation is very high with good layouts and generous room sizes with minimal waste in circulation zones. In addition, most of the residential accommodation has amenity space by way of balcony provision, which assists in making the most of the far reaching view across Loughton.

Of particular note are the 4 existing studio flats within the front building. These remain unaltered through the project and are of generous proportions. All 4 of these are occupied.

Comments were received with regards to the quality of the entrance into the apartments. These comments were valid and on reflection we have been able to produce a welcoming entrance into the apartments. The entrance now contains a double gateway and widened entrance and entrance area. Within the entrance will be welcoming lights internal and external. The internal arrangement the access area has also been improved to make a more user friendly area.

widened 1.8m gateway with large lobby area to be open and well lit

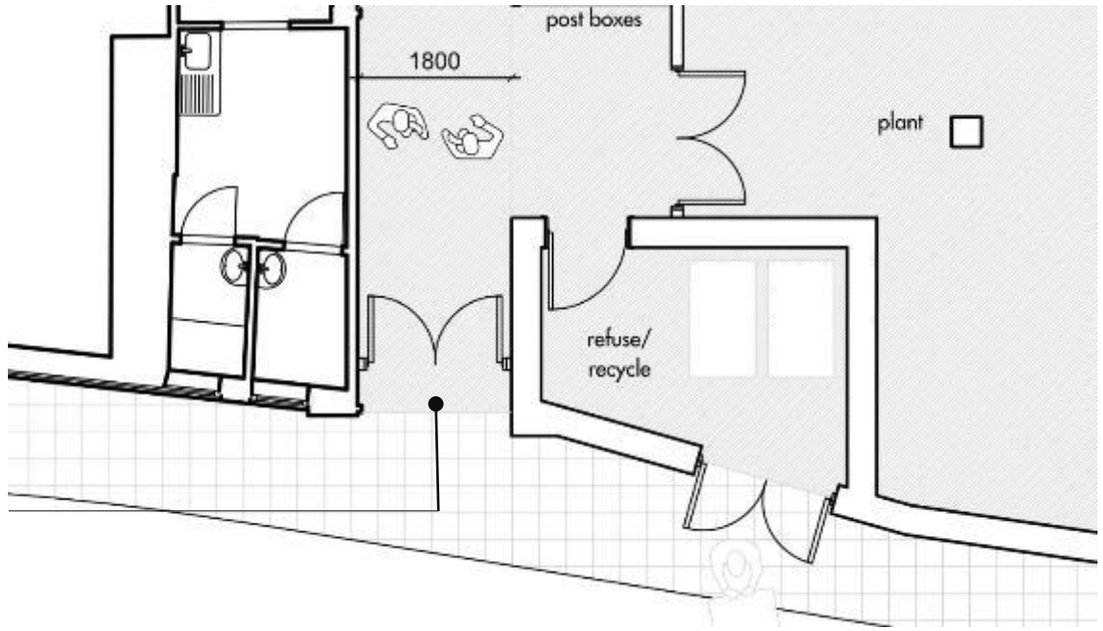


Diagram illustrating welcoming entrance lobby into development

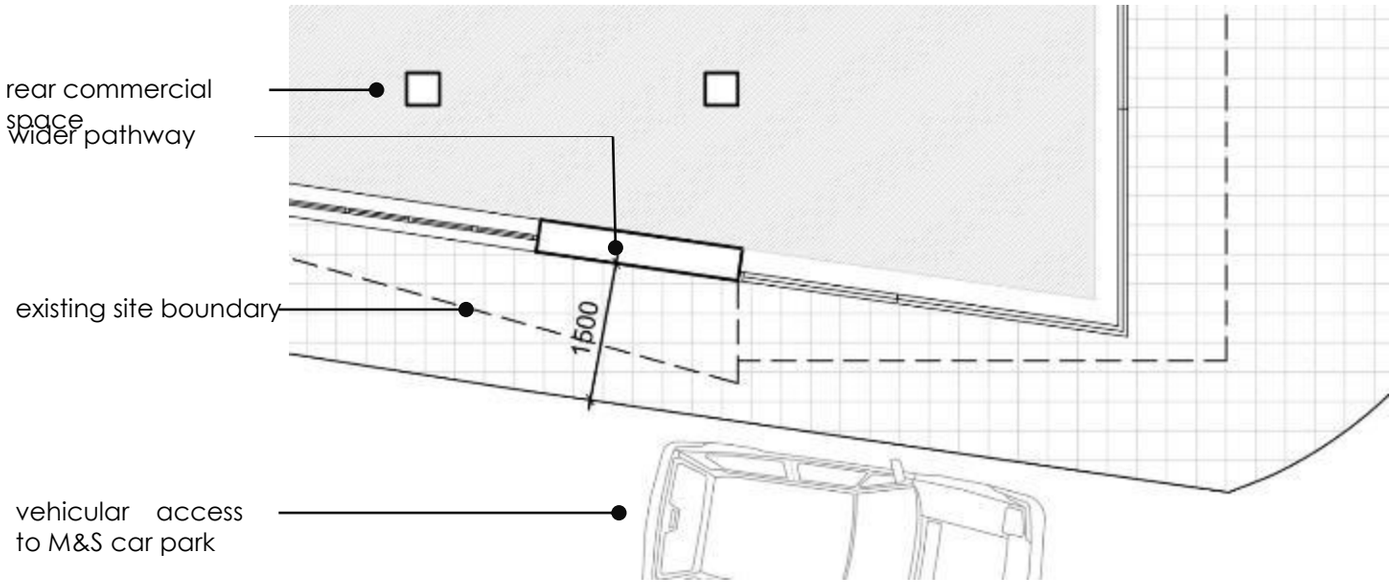


Diagram showing new pathway to be established for better pedestrian access to rear of site

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6. Assessment of Design Proposals

6.6 **– Car Park & Transport**

The previously approved proposal on site contained no car parking as a result of the site's high PTAL level, due to its very close proximity to very good transport links and its location in Loughton Centre. Loughton is a very effective centre in that it covers a wide range of amenities and with the city only 17 minutes by train, dependency on the car is greatly reduced.

Our proposal is an 'apartment' scheme and will appeal to young professionals looking for their first home. Such people tend to work long hours either locally or within the city, therefore such the dependency for a car is negligible. As an alternative, we do propose to incorporate cycle parking as this is an affordable and green form of transport.

In order to improve the public realm, we have established an ample pathway at the side of the proposed building that promotes a regular, safer, flow of pedestrian traffic from the High Road to Marks & Spencers, it's adjacent car park, especially at the 'crossing' which currently terminates in the absence of a suitable footpath which contributes to a more public friendly place.



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7. Conclusion

We consider this proposal as now complete; to be a significant improvement over the existing EPF/2081/12 consent and one that complies with the council's policies and standards. The development will assist the council in reaching their target for new homes and also create further local employment through the expansion of commercial units to the ground floor.

The proposal will be one of great design and precise detailing, setting a new level of high quality development for the area. Clear Architects have a very good reputation in the local area, working on a number of similar projects and have great aspirations to develop the site into an example of architecture at its best.

In line with these aspirations; we will be holding an 'open studio' to welcome local councillors and societies to review the application, so that we can discuss our proposals; highlighting the high standard of design and development.

We look forward to hearing from the Council and respectfully request planning permission is granted for the proposal.





Existing & Proposed view from further down High Road

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8. Application Drawings

The following pages consist of the associated planning application drawings:

229-EX-01
229-EX-02
229-EX-03

229-PL-01
229-PL-02
229-PL-03
229-PL-04
229-PL-05
229-PL-06
229-PL-07

229-PL-08 (Area Schedule)

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