

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**ACCOMPANYING THE PLANNING APPLICATION**

**Proposed ground floor extension to existing  
commercial units, plus associated change of use  
for all commercial units to all be Class E**

**FOR**

**SHEEN LANE DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

**MARCH 2021**

# SILVERLINE ARCHITECTS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This statement has been prepared in support of our client's application to extend the ground floor commercial premises at Ewing House, whilst establishing/confirming Class E use in all three of the existing units;
- 1.2. The proposed extension is to be a single-storey flat-roofed structure, continuing the design/aesthetic features of the recently-redesigned upper floors of Ewing House;
- 1.3. The proposals have been informed by the LPA's refusal of previous application 20/01731/OUT, dated 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021;

## 2. SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1. The application site is located at the junction of Kings Road and King Edward Road in Brentwood, north of Brentwood railway station;
- 2.2. Kings Road forms the northern part of Warley Hill, which is one of Brentwood's District Shopping Centres (p118, Brentwood Local Plan, policy PC08);
- 2.3. The application site is located within the Brentwood Station Character Area (p68, Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide);
- 2.4. This area is described as having a mix of uses, with opportunities for improved public realm and wayfinding from the station to the town centre, to the north;
- 2.5. The TCDG also notes "*Existing uses in the Brentwood Station character area should be promoted to enable them to capitalise on the increased footfall*";
- 2.6. Brentwood Rail Station is due to host the forthcoming Elizabeth Line (formerly Crossrail);

## 3. APPLICATION SITE & LAND USE

- 3.1. The application site, Ewing House, is located north of Brentwood Rail Station, occupying a corner site at the junction of Kings Road and King Edward Road;
- 3.2. Ewing House is an eight-storey (ground plus seven) building, designed in a modernist style, running parallel to Kings Road, and separated from it by a paved forecourt (forming part of Ewing House's demise, and not part of the public highway);

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- 3.3. Ewing House is set back from the footpath by some 5.6-6.5m, with the interstitial space/forecourt (within the ownership of Ewing House) being surfaced with concrete paving to match that of the public footpath, and separated from the public footpath by a line of concrete bollards;
  - 3.4. There is a single small tree within the paved area, with a larger brickwork planter at the southern end of the site;
  - 3.5. Kings road drops in elevation from north to south, with a change in level of some 1.4m across the length of Ewing House;
  - 3.6. Immediately to the north of the site, towards the town centre, is Station Place: a predominantly white-rendered, five-storey contemporary building, including four storeys of residential accommodation, also arranged above ground floor commercial units;
  - 3.7. Station House includes no forecourt/setback, and instead extends out to the line of the public footpath/highway;
  - 3.8. Ewing House has been recently extended upwards, and its exterior envelope partially redesigned – both in connection with the change of use from B1(a) Offices to C3 Residential;
  - 3.9. In its current form, the building is thus formed from ground floor commercial units, with seven storeys of residential accommodation above;
  - 3.10. The facades are formed from a combination of a white-rendered concrete frame, feature panels of black brickwork, and limited areas of white glazed brick at high level ground floor;
  - 3.11. The original concrete frame was designed in a “decorative” fashion, with the columns, beams etc detailed to provide articulation to the façade through the use of projecting ledges, vertical shadow gaps, etc;
  - 3.12. The ground floor commercial units are all currently vacant, and formerly their shopfronts/facades were of poor architectural quality, formed from a mix of dated glazing systems;
  - 3.13. As noted, there is a significant change in level across the length of Ewing House, and as a result, each of the three retail units features a different façade height; The steps in level are denoted by low brickwork walls;
  - 3.14. The residential accommodation on the upper floors of the building is accessed via a lobby at the southern end of the site, facing onto Kings Road, adjacent the three commercial units;
  - 3.15. Prior to September 2020, the lawful uses of the three units were: Betting Shop (B1(a)), Tanning Parlour (Sui Generis), and Café (A3);
  - 3.16. Subsequently, A3 has been folded into Class E, and Betting Shops have been reclassified as Sui Generis; The Tanning Parlour remains Sui Generis;

#### 4. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Corner of Kings Road and King Edward Road

#### 5. PLANNING BACKGROUND

There have been a range of previous applications etc of relevance to this application:

##### 5.1. 17/01971/FUL

5.1.1. Proposed two-storey roof extension to existing six-storey building to provide 10 no. residential dwellings (class C3), together with external alterations, sub-surface water storage tanks, plant room, refuse store, cycle parking, 19.5 m<sup>2</sup> extension to ground floor and other associated infrastructure;

5.1.2. Refused by notice dated 4 April 2018;

5.1.3. *"The proposed two storey extension to the roof of the building by way of its size, scale and mass would result in an overbearing impact on the surrounding residents in Gresham Road and Kind Edward Road contrary to policy CP1 (ii) of the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan and one of the core principles of the NPPF which seeks to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings";*

##### 5.2. APP/H1515/W/18/3204413 (appeal re 17/01971/FUL)

5.2.1. Successful appeal in respect of 17/01971/FUL;

5.2.2. Appeal granted by notice dated 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019;

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5.3. 18/00465/FUL

5.3.1. Retrospective - Change of use from clothes shop (A1 Retail) to Tanning salon (Sui Generis);

5.3.2. Granted by notice dated 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018;

5.4. 20/00301/PNCOU

5.4.1. Prior Approval Notification Class O - Change of use of floors 1-5 from office space Class (B1(a)) to residential use to create 50 residential units Class (C3);

5.4.2. Granted by notice dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020;

5.5. 20/01731/OUT

5.5.1. Outline application for the extension to ground floor commercial units and ancillary residential (plant and entrance lobby) spaces;

5.5.2. Refused by notice dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020;

5.5.3. Refusal focussed on the fact that the applicant wished to develop up to the line of their ownership, and that no improvements to the public realm had been proposed (additional concerns were raised re the detail of the rear servicing arrangements, though it is believed that these could have been resolved through conditions to secure additional detail);

5.5.4. *"1. The proposed development is of a design, layout and scale that is inappropriate with its surrounding context and represents an overdevelopment of the site that would promote poor placemaking and would serve to further detract from the public realm, pedestrian permeability and wayfinding and overall character and quality of the Brentwood Station Character Area [policy references omitted].*

*2 The proposed development by way of its lack of defensible space and information to demonstrate that the issues raised in respect of functionality of the commercial units could be addressed, would amount to issues of pedestrian safety and obstruction of a service road to the detriment of occupiers in Station Place and the surrounding locality [policy references omitted]"*

## 6. DESIGN STRATEGY AND SOLUTION

### 6.1. Brief Requirements and Background

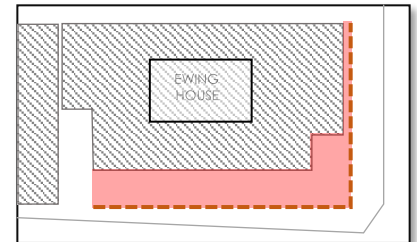
- 6.1.1. The design brief for this project is to extend the ground floor commercial accommodation at Ewing House, and to update the external appearance of the ground floor of the building to better sympathise with the updated made as part of application 17/01971/FUL (approved via Appeal);
- 6.1.2. A previously-submitted proposal, 20/01731/OUT, was refused, with the refusal focussing on a perceived lack of enhancement to the public realm in the vicinity of the station, and the impact of the proposals upon footpath width (notwithstanding that the footpath in question is part of the demise/private ownership of Ewing House);
- 6.1.3. Concerns were also raised re: the detail of a rear extension, although this has been omitted entirely as part of the current application;
- 6.1.4. The proposed extension from application 20/01731/OUT extended approximately 5.1m from the existing building line;
- 6.1.5. The external appearance was described as being acceptable in the 20/01731/OUT Officer's Report (*"The appearance and elevational treatment of the scheme would replicate that of the remainder of the building to include the recently approved facade treatments that would improve and modernise the external appearance of the building, no objections are made in this regard."*);
- 6.1.6. However, the report concluded *"In summary the proposed development is of a design, layout and scale that is inappropriate with its surrounding context and represents an overdevelopment of the site that would promote poor placemaking and serve to further detract from the public realm, pedestrian permeability and wayfinding and overall character and quality of the Brentwood Station Character Area"*;
- 6.1.7. It is understood that it was felt that the design was not based on "quality placemaking" (from the Design Officer's comments: *"The external space at pedestrian level could offer a meaningful albeit small quantum of public realm with landscaping which would serve to enhance its setting. The proposals in my professional opinion by seeking to maximize to the 'blue line' of ownership the GIA of the building I do not find as being derived from quality placemaking and would result as encroachment*

upon the busy thoroughfare to the detriment of the Town Centre at its entry point"), implying to us that an acceptable proposal would be one which engaged in creating a public space which provides an enhancement to the site's role as part of a "gateway" to the town centre;

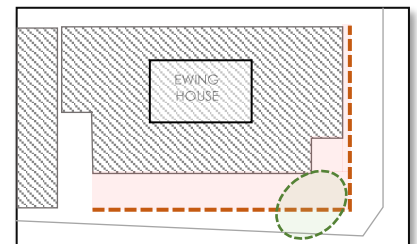
6.1.8. Additionally, it is understood that an acceptable solution would be one wherein the proposed extension was set further back into the applicant's land, as opposed to continuing the building line of the neighbouring Station House;

## 6.2. Design Development from 20/01731/OUT

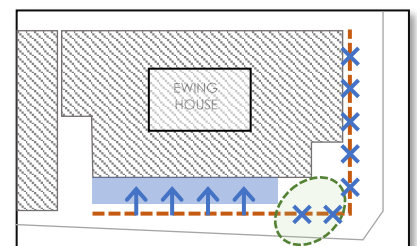
6.2.1. The design of refused 20/01731/OUT was based on an extension of the ground floor, including the existing residential entrance lobby, to provide a new façade of consistent design to all ground floor areas of Ewing House, including to King Edward Road and the rear of the development;



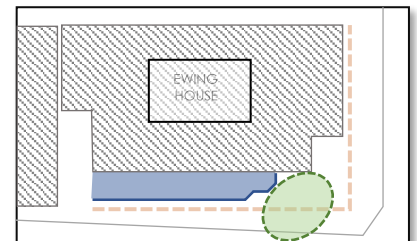
6.2.2. The inclusion of an extended residential lobby to streamline/neaten the building line resulted in no opportunity to provide any element of public realm improvement at the junction, which appears to be a key aspiration for the LPA, based on comments within the 20/01731/OUT Officer's Report;



6.2.3. Our intention with this revised proposal is to use the space formerly allotted to extending the residential lobby to provide a small corner "plaza", with a view to improving the public realm and overall navigability of the local area, as per the aspirations of the LPA, expressed through the Town Centre Design Guide and the officer's report provided in connection with refused application 20/01731/OUT;



6.2.4. Forming this "plaza" in place of a solid corner means that the previous streamlined redesign of the ground floor façade would no longer be appropriate, as there no longer exists an opportunity to neatly link the front and side facades (these being split by the lack of corner infill);





6.2.5. As such, in place of this, the southern corner of the extension has been cut at 45 degrees and glazed, to both better respond to the junction, and to provide both articulation and passive surveillance to the proposed plaza;

6.2.6. This is important, in order to avoid an inappropriately-protruding flank wall facing the junction;

6.2.7. The 45 degree corner has been further "softened" through the detail of the glazing, roof overhang, and planting, with a view to both better integrating the extension and proposed open space, and to smoothing the change in pavement width;

6.2.8. The revised form, with its facets, angles etc, varies somewhat from the heavily-structured design of Ewing House, and as such, it would no longer appear appropriate to tie the proposed parapet line through with the first floor sill level;

6.2.9. Accordingly, the parapet line has been lowered, to allow the extension to read as a sympathetic modern addition, as opposed to a more straightforward extrapolation of its current features;

6.2.10. Changes are no longer proposed to the King Edward Road façade, or the existing corner planter;

6.2.11. As Ewing House is now in residential use, it is felt by the owners that it would be inappropriate to provide e.g. fixed public seating around the building's entrance, as this could encourage loitering or other anti-social behaviour by non-residents, which could lead to residents feeling threatened or otherwise uncomfortable;

6.2.12. As such, proposed public realm improvements are limited to the formation of a new open space, and the provision of fixed planting;

6.2.13. Previously, 20/01731/OUT proposed an extension measuring approximately 5.1m from the existing building line;

6.2.14. This has been reduced to 4.1m, leaving between 1.5 and 2.4m of clear space between the extent of the proposal and the public footpath (which measures 2.4m wide in and of itself);

6.3. It is hoped that in conjunction with the reduced extent of the ground floor extension, this will allay any concerns about the pavement width;



Design Overview

- 6.3.1. The proposal is for a single-storey glazed extension to the ground floor commercial units at Ewing House, alongside provision of new paving to form a small public space, and the change of use of all three existing units to Class E, where two are currently Sui Generis;
- 6.3.2. The external appearance of the proposed extension is intended to continue the materiality and detailing of Ewing House following alterations under consent ref 17/01971/FUL, comprising a white-rendered structure, with recessed panels and features in a black brick, and anthracite grey fenestration, sills, copings etc;
- 6.3.3. The proposed form varies from that of the host building by incorporating steps and facets, with a view to responding-to and shaping the surrounding public realm;

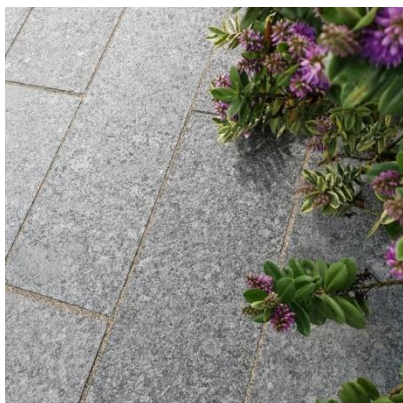


PROPOSED PHOTOMONTAGE & PHOTOGRAPH OF EXISTING

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#### 6.4. Materials

- 6.4.1. The proposed materials are generally to match those approved as per consent 17/01971/FUL, and associated DoC ref 17/01971/COND/1;
- 6.4.2. Namely: White render, dark-coloured brick (to closely match existing) with charcoal grey pointing; RAL 7016 aluminium fenestration, detailing etc;
- 6.4.3. The paving has not been specified in detail (nor the stone to the feature planter), as we would welcome guidance from the LPA as to what their aspirations are;
- 6.4.4. We note that Brentwood LPA have previously been proactive in this regard, e.g. in the request for glazed white brick to the first floor facades of Ewing House during the determination of 17/01971/COND/1;
- 6.4.5. In the absence of any aspiration from the LPA we would propose a dark grey stone plank as per the image here:



#### 6.5. Parking & Servicing

- 6.5.1. The existing commercial units are serviced via an unadopted highway in the ownership of Ewing house, located to the rear of the site;
- 6.5.2. No changes are proposed to this arrangement, and no increase in vehicle traffic is anticipated;
- 6.5.3. The Officer's Report for refused application 20/01731/OUT noted that: "*A site visit has been previously undertaken and the information that was submitted in association with the application has been fully considered by the Highway Authority. From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority as it is not contrary to the Development Management Highway policies.*"
- 6.5.4. Notwithstanding this, the report noted concerns about the proposed rear extension – however, this has been omitted entirely;

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- 6.5.5. Application 20/01731/OUT included a significantly larger area of proposed additional commercial space (approx. 75sqm, as opposed to approx. 140sqm), so we understand that if no concerns were raised re parking for that application, then similarly, no such concerns should apply in the case of this smaller proposed extension;
- 6.5.6. Waste and recycling will continue to be dealt with at the rear of the property without change;

#### 6.6. Landscaping

- 6.6.1. It is proposed to provide fixed planting as part of the proposed extension, and to form a new paved open area at the southern end of the site;
- 6.6.2. Presently the paving used within Ewing House's ownership is identical to that used for the public footpath;
- 6.6.3. Using the line of the existing surface water drain (within the applicant's land) as a demarcation point, new stone paving has been proposed between this line and the façade of the proposed extension;
- 6.6.4. We have provided limited detail regarding the choice of paving, and would welcome a condition in respect of the final choice of materials/details for this element, as we are not aware of whether Brentwood council/LPA have any specific aspirations in this regard;

#### 6.7. Use Classes

- 6.7.1. It is proposed to amend the Lawful Use of the three existing commercial units to Class E;

### 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The proposals have been developed in response to the LPA's previous comments, with a view to providing an enhancement to the street scene and local area, as well as enhancing the existing ground floor commercial uses;
- 6.2. We believe that the proposals support the goals of the LPA as expressed in the emerging Local Plan, in particular policies HP13-18, and PC01 02, 04, 07, 08;
- 6.3. We will welcome the use of appropriate Conditions to secure materials or design features of appropriate quality;