PLANNING APPLICATION

AGORA design & management

PERMIT

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

for

PROPOSED NEW FACILITY

for

OPTIVET REFERRALS
3 DOWNLEY ROAD
HAVANT
HAMPSHIRE



28 July 2011

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Agora Design & Management Limited were appointed in 2010 by Optivet Referrals to obtain a 'Change of Use' Planning approval to convert the existing Southern Gas Network Depot into an ophthalmology referral clinic, application number APP/10/00221. This application was approved and therefore the site at present has approval for D1 planning use.

The project involves the 'stripping out' of the existing fit-out leaving the building envelope free to house a single storey veterinary centre. The Centre will comprise of: 6no. consulting rooms, dedicated cat and dog waiting areas, staff facilities, 2no. prep rooms (one clean, one dirty), 2no. operating theatres, CT Scanner room, X-Ray room, Ultrasound room, dog kennelling and cattery facilities for inpatient animals, all necessary offices for nurses, vets and management and ancillary WC areas, stores and plant room.

The proposals also include a new car parking and landscaping scheme, providing 13 no. staff parking bays, and 23 visitor parking bays, including 1 no. disabled bay situated at the front.

The site, and building particularly, lends itself well for a facility of this nature; the surrounding road network and available parking are excellent, and the building shape allows for a simple conversion.

This application does not seek to alter any of the scope of the approved previous application referred to above – this application does request planning approval for changes resulting from a redesign of the internal layout which moves the proposed main entrance to the southern (rather than the previously approved northern) elevation. Works have not commenced on site.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

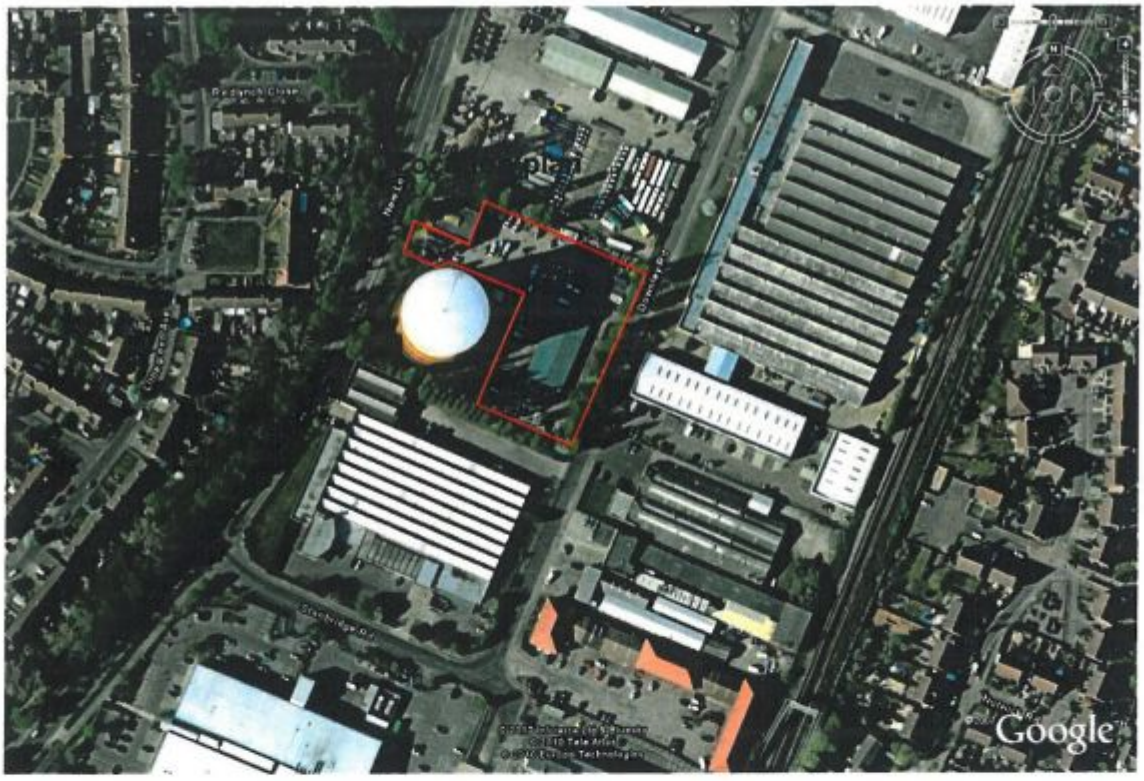
2.1 Site Location

3, Downley Road
Havant
Hampshire

2.2 Existing Site Description

The existing site comprises a former Southern Gas Network Depot which is now vacant. An adjacent building has been retained by Southern Gas, along with the gas holder. The building is located on tarmac hardstanding with a wire mesh fence with concrete posts surrounding the whole site area. A number of existing parking bays are located and indicated in thermoplastic paint around the site perimeter. The site is approximately 1.2 acres / 0.488 hectares, located behind a sliding gate along Downley Road (shown in red on the below images).

The existing building envelope is to remain unaltered with exception of alterations to the fenestration. The previously approved entrance lobby has been omitted from the revised proposals.





Location Plan

3.0 DESIGN LAYOUT

3.1 Usage

The proposed development comprises the veterinary centre building, and a new landscaping scheme to provide 35 no. car parking spaces for staff and visitors plus 1no. disabled car parking bay. New surfacing and screen fencing enhances the visual impact of the proposals.

The facility proposed will provide a purpose designed ophthalmology referral clinic offering an extensive range of ocular examinations and surgical procedures. The building will create a larger up-to-date facility to enable the surgery to provide the best possible care for their patients and owners.

Normal working hours: 8.30am to 5.30pm (Monday – Friday).

Additional emergency cover is offered for out of hours needs.

3.2 Extent of the Built Development

The referral centre building will retain exactly the same footprint as the existing built structure. A small number of staff kennels are proposed to be provided to the rear of the site, to be located within a fenced compound.

3.3 Layout

The veterinary centre is open to the public where a first opinion veterinary surgeon has referred an animal with a sickness which needs assessment and treatment by a referral clinician. Public access is restricted to the reception area, with dog and cat waiting areas, WC facilities and the 6 no. consulting rooms. 35 no. car parking spaces are provided for visitors and staff to the south and north (staff only) of the building, plus 1no. disabled car parking space provided adjacent to the front entrance. The remainder of the building is private and restricted to staff only, housing clinical treatment areas along with facilities for staff and animal aftercare.

Good circulation is provided around the building by the retention of the existing tarmac surfacing to road, parking, and pathway areas. A covered acoustically attenuated external kennel area is proposed for staff dogs to the northwest corner of the existing building.

The northwest area of the application site is to be retained for future expansion – please refer to application drawings.

3.5 Landscaping

Great importance is given to ensure the facility is welcoming to clients. As the site was originally a gas depot, its nature is one of practicality and economics, with little regard to aesthetics and therefore timber fencing is proposed to screen the remaining areas of the site which are retained for future expansion. This will not only enhance the appearance of the site from Downley Road but will also improve security. The existing soft landscaping is to be retained and tar-applied chippings are to be used to resurface the existing expanses of the roadways and parking to the front aspects of the site. The parking area immediately outside the entrance lobby is to be paved with block pavoirs to further highlight entry into the building.

(Refer to Planning Application drawings for landscaping proposals).

3.6 Appearance

Externally, it is not proposed that the existing shell of the building will change beyond adjusting or adding windows/doors to suit the new internal layout. Any openings requiring adjustment will be in filled with brickwork to match.

The new entrance doors into the reception area will be constructed from metal framed glazed screens with transparencies applied for clear signage and designation of the public entry point into the building.

3.7 Acoustic Considerations

The veterinary clinic facility will not adversely affect the locality. The staff dog kennelling area has been designed with sound attenuating laurel planting and timber fencing, which have been proved to reduce noise emissions significantly, and its location and degree of enclosure ensures that disturbance (i.e. unsettling stimulus of the dogs) is kept to a minimum.

Internally, consideration to the cat and principally dog wards, has been given as follows:

3.8 Limits to Transmission of Noise

Sound absorption and sound insulation are two of the most common techniques we use to limit the transmission of noise.

Sound absorption reduces the level of reflected sound and Agora Design & Management Ltd have been specifying such materials in the fabric of kennel developments for many years. These materials will be used for all internal ceiling linings to areas housing potential animal noise breakout. This is perhaps the most direct way of limiting escape of noise to the surrounding environment.

The sound absorption lining to the ceilings prevents reverberation and effectively 'deadens' the bulk of any barking before the sound waves are able to escape from the perimeter of the building.

Furthermore, due to the very nature of the proposed development, the companion animals frequenting the facility are unwell or require medical treatment, and are therefore more than often subdued and quietened by the whole experience.

Privacy measures between consulting rooms and offices have also been deployed.

4.0 ACCESS

This access statement sets out to address both the issues of 'access' as part of the planning application design and access statement as well as forming the full 'access statement' to address the obligations of reasonableness introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act.

This Statement therefore addresses the following issues:

- Consider the needs of all potential users;
- Identify the type and appropriateness of good practice guidance used, and meets the overall objectives of "reasonableness".

Generally, this Statement is required to and takes into consideration the following legislation:

- Part M of the Building Regulations
- British Standard 8300 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act
- The Sign Design Code
- The Code for Lighting
- DRC Codes of Practice
- Other relevant sections of the Building Regulations, including Part B: Fire Safety and Part K: Protection from Falling, Collision and Impact
- Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963

This Access Statement is not an exhaustive list, but offers an opportunity to improve the buildings and spaces by considering the way, at the very early stages of the project and throughout the project, the proposed use of the building, or will use it and how it will be managed in terms of the needs of the users. The Statement endeavours to achieve the highest quality outcome to ensure inclusive access for all regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping.

4.1 Means of Site Access

The proposed site is well served by Downey Road which has very good links to the following roads: A27 Havant Bypass, and the A3 (M). Due to the nature of the business the vast majority will arrive by car.

Public footpaths are present along Downey Road and New Lane.

Access links to the site are therefore well established and there is no need to alter the existing site entrance. Existing gate controls are to be retained.

It should be noted, as indicated on the planning application site drawings, that a second vehicular access onto the site is available from New Lane. The drawings also indicate two Rights of Access across the site in favour of National Grid Gas PLC and Southern Gas Networks PLC. These have been maintained as part of the proposals by either full retention (in the second instance as this is a 'no build' requirement) or via a diverted route (in the first instance which is a requirement for a permitted access across the site only). A turning circle facility has also been incorporated for the benefit of National Grid Gas PLC.

4.2 Car Parking

The proposed veterinary clinic scheme includes parking spaces for 35no. visitors and staff cars, with 1no. car parking space being designated for use by disabled people, sized, surfaced, and provided proportionately in accordance with the Building Regulations and DDA requirements. These spaces are conveniently located near to the entrance doors at the front of the veterinary clinic, giving convenient and level access into the building. The provision of disabled car parking spaces is calculated and considered appropriate within the overall car parking provision. Paths from car parking areas are level with ramps not exceeding 1 in 20 and in accordance with approved Document M recommendations.

4.3 Site Wide Circulation

Once the site is entered and/or visitors are parked, clear directional signage leads visitors to the building's entrance. Where slopes are required, maximum 1 in 20 ramps are provided. Power assisted door entry is provided to the main entrance doors. Door widths have been considered in accordance with Building Regulations.

External lighting along access roads and paths will be maintained to meet standards laid down in BS5489.

4.4 Horizontal Circulation

Horizontal circulation has been considered for both public and staff. Clear level routes are provided to all areas with adequate corridor widths, decoration providing adequate visual contrast and suitable seating provision. Internal building signage has been provided indicating easy access to WC facilities for wheelchair and able-bodied persons. The disabled toilets are wheelchair friendly, including the lobby, with visual contrasting facilities and adequate turning space. Horizontal circulation, generally, is via adequate width clear opening doors, fitted with vision panels in accordance with the recommendations. The opening pressure of all doors will be set as close as possible to 20 Newtons (preferably under, where possible).

It should be noted that due to safety issues concerning the handling of animals, able bodied persons only are permitted to work within the theatre suite and its supporting animal wards, prep areas, imaging rooms, and therefore provision for wheelchair users within these areas have not been accommodated. Any animal handling staff member who becomes temporarily disabled (through accidents/illness) will be given alternative tasks outside of this area.

4.6 Impaired Sight and Hearing Provision

The door surrounds and general decorations will be in contrasting colours, and where possible, contrasting colours have been used to warn visually impaired of changes in direction, level and features. Edge protection will be provided at vulnerable corners. The colour scheme will be designed to highlight the walls, floors, reception desk and ironmongery. The guidance used will be as produced by ICI paints and Royal National Institute for the Blind. Internal signage will include Braille and colour contrasts where required and a hearing loop is to be installed to the reception desk area.

Positions of sockets and switches to all areas will be installed in accordance with Part M and Part B of the approved documents where appropriate.

4.7 Means of Escape

Means of escape is in accordance with BS5588.

The means of escape, in case of fire, have been designed in accordance with the Building Regulations and to the approval of the Building Control Officer/Fire Officer. The actual provisions of means of escape strategy for disabled people will be addressed by the client following their Risk Assessment and fire precautions work place regulations, and a suitable personal emergency egress plan will be developed for individual staff members with disabilities as and when required.

Fire doors at various locations are fitted with large lever handles or push plates with the words 'push down to open' signs. It should be noted that a 'double door arrangement' has been provided for Means of Escape purposes only from the Theatre Suite – this is in order to maintain sterility.

4.8 Toilet Facilities

2no. disabled toilets have been provided with adequate provisions in accordance with the recommendations of Part M, for the use of visitors primarily or temporarily disabled staff, as well as segregated female and male changing rooms with toilets and showers.

4.9 Evacuation

In an emergency, visitors will evacuate through the designated emergency exit doors, highlighted via standard statutory signage and emergency lighting. Staff will undergo basic training in evacuation procedures and will be responsible for getting customers out of the building; however, alarms will be installed in accordance with L3 Enhanced.