DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Removal of Timber Cladding and Replacement with HardiePlank Cladding and Fire Breaks

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for proposed external alterations to the protruding timber clad walls at Ridge House, Springfield Lane, WD3 8UE.

The proposal relates to Phase 1 only, comprising the central section of the building to the front and rear. The works involve the removal of the existing timber cladding to the external faces of the balconies, the introduction of fire breaks at floor level, and the installation of a new HardiePlank cladding finish.

The proposed works are intended to improve the fire performance and durability of the external wall construction whilst providing a durable and visually appropriate replacement finish.

The works to the sections of the building at either end are intended to form Phase 2 and will be undertaken at a later date. Those works do not form part of this application and are expressly excluded from the scope of the current proposal.

Site and Existing Building

The application relates to a low-rise residential building comprising a central common parts section with protruding overhanging detailing serving the residential accommodation. The external faces of the protruding balconies are currently finished with timber cladding. The existing timber cladding is to be removed as part of the proposed works.

The existing building is to remain in residential use following completion of the works.

Proposed Development

The proposed works comprise the following:

- Carefully remove the existing timber cladding from the external faces of the protruding balconies within the Phase 1 area.
- Remove associated battens, fixings and any redundant components where required to facilitate the new construction.
- Inspect the exposed construction and undertake any necessary local repairs.
- Install suitable fire breaks at floor level within the external wall/cladding construction.
- Provide fire stopping and associated measures in accordance with the approved construction details and relevant Building Regulations requirements.
- Install a suitable backing/support system as required for the new cladding.
- Install new HardiePlank fibre-cement cladding to the external faces of the balconies.
- Provide suitable trims, flashings, corner details, junctions and fixings to provide a neat and weather-resistant installation.
- Ensure the new cladding is properly detailed around balcony floors, soffits, openings and junctions with the existing building.
- Make good all disturbed areas on completion.

The proposed works are primarily a replacement of the existing external cladding and do not involve a material alteration to the overall form or use of the building.

Design Approach

The design approach has been developed to provide a durable and visually appropriate replacement for the existing timber cladding whilst addressing fire safety considerations associated with the external wall construction.

The removal of the existing timber cladding provides an opportunity to introduce appropriate fire breaks at floor level and improve the fire performance and insulation of the external cladding arrangement.

HardiePlank cladding is proposed as the replacement finish. The material provides a robust, low-maintenance external finish and is considered appropriate for use on the existing low-rise residential building.

The proposed cladding will follow the existing arrangement of the elevations as far as reasonably practicable. The intention is to retain the established architectural rhythm and appearance of the protruding balconies rather than introduce a substantially different form of construction.

The replacement cladding will be installed using appropriate proprietary fixings and support systems, with all junctions and interfaces properly detailed to provide a durable and weather-resistant finish.

5. Appearance and Materials

The existing timber cladding will be replaced with HardiePlank fibre-cement cladding.

The proposed finish will be selected to complement the existing building and surrounding elevations. The colour and profile will be agreed as appropriate through the application process and/or in accordance with the submitted drawings and material specifications.

The use of a consistent plank arrangement will provide a clean and contemporary appearance whilst retaining the established scale and proportions of the existing balcony elevations.

The proposal is not intended to create a visually dominant feature and will maintain the general architectural character of the existing building in finish and colour.

Fire Safety

A principal objective of the proposed works is to improve the fire performance of the external balcony construction.

Following removal of the existing timber cladding, fire breaks will be incorporated at floor level within the external wall/cladding construction. The fire breaks and associated fire-stopping measures will be designed and installed to comply with the relevant requirements of the Building Regulations and the manufacturer's tested system requirements.

The final construction will be subject to appropriate technical detailing and specification, including consideration of:

- cavity barriers and fire breaks;
- fire stopping at floor levels;
- interfaces with floors and soffits;
- junctions with existing walls;
- penetrations and window openings;

- fixing and support arrangements; and
- the fire performance of the proposed cladding system and associated components.

The Building Regulations requirements will be addressed separately as part of the Building Regulations approval process.

Access

The proposal does not alter the existing access arrangements to the building or the residential accommodation.

The existing walls will continue to be accessed in the same manner as at present, and no changes are proposed to entrances, circulation routes or means of escape as a consequence of the external cladding replacement.

Temporary access arrangements, including scaffolding, access platforms or other temporary works, may be required during construction. These will be designed and managed by the appointed contractor and will be removed on completion.

Where works affect common areas or access routes, appropriate measures will be implemented to maintain safe access for residents and visitors throughout the construction period.

Construction and Phasing

The works are proposed to be undertaken in phases.

Phase 1 – Current Application

This application relates solely to the central common parts section of the building, including the associated protruding walls.

The existing timber cladding will be removed, fire breaks introduced at floor level and the external elevations finished with the proposed HardiePlank cladding.

Phase 2 – Future Works

Further works are anticipated to the protruding balcony areas at either end of the building. These works are intended to be undertaken at a later date and do not form part of this application.

No permission is sought under this application for the Phase 2 works.

The phasing approach allows the works to be undertaken in a controlled manner whilst allowing the building to remain operational and occupied.

Landscaping and External Areas

The proposal does not involve any changes to existing landscaping, gardens, hardstanding or other external areas.

Any temporary access arrangements required during construction will be removed on completion and affected areas will be made good.

Sustainability and Durability

The proposed works will improve the durability and maintenance characteristics of the external balcony elevations.

The existing timber cladding requires ongoing maintenance and is being replaced with a fibre-cement cladding system designed for external use. The proposed HardiePlank finish provides a robust and durable external surface with reduced maintenance requirements.

The incorporation of fire breaks also provides an opportunity to improve the fire safety characteristics of the existing external wall/cladding arrangement.

Where practicable, existing materials will be carefully removed and disposed of or recycled in accordance with relevant waste management requirements.

11. Impact on Neighbouring Properties

The proposed works are confined to the existing building envelope and do not involve an extension or increase in the overall footprint of the building. There is therefore not anticipated to be any material change to the relationship between the building and neighbouring properties.

Planning Considerations

The proposal represents the repair and improvement of an existing low-rise residential building.

The works will:

- retain the existing use of the building;
- retain the general form and proportions of the existing external walls;
- replace existing timber cladding with a durable external cladding system;
- introduce fire breaks at floor level;
- improve the fire performance of the external wall construction;
- improve the durability and maintenance requirements of the elevations; and
- have no material effect on the building footprint or existing access arrangements.

The proposal is therefore considered to represent a sympathetic alteration to the existing building which responds to both fire safety and building maintenance requirements whilst retaining the established architectural character of the property.

Conclusion

The proposed Phase 1 works provide for the removal and replacement of the existing timber cladding to the protruding walls to the front and rear centrally only.

The introduction of fire breaks at floor level, together with the installation of HardiePlank cladding, will provide an improved, durable and appropriately detailed external wall/cladding arrangement.

The works do not materially alter the existing building form, use or access arrangements and will retain the established character and appearance of the building.

The works to the balcony areas at either end of the building will form a separate Phase 2 and are specifically excluded from the current application.

It is considered that the proposed Phase 1 works represent an appropriate and proportionate improvement to the existing building, with particular benefits in relation to fire safety, durability and maintenance.