

Oakhill Veterinary Centre, Proposed two-storey veterinary building – Access Statement

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

1.1 Oakhill Veterinary Centre is committed to a policy of equality, inclusion, and accessibility. The basic right for access to and use of the building for all is recognised as the most fundamental basis upon which the design has been established. It is recognised that all individuals have a range of abilities which vary greatly and some of which may be impaired requiring consideration upon the designer's part to ensure that as wide a range of abilities as possible are accommodated. The client has been an integral part of the design team and have assisted in ensuring an inclusive design for all from the inception of the project.

1.2 We have produced a design to the latest legislation and good practice guidance available. We have adopted the guidance so far as is reasonably practical for the type and nature of the building, the restrictions of the site and the intended occupiers.

2 DESIGN BASIS

2.1 The design requirements for the works are to provide the minimum required standards set out within Building Regulations Approved Document Part M: access to and use of buildings, volume 2: buildings other than dwellings, and BS 8300:2018 (part 1 and 2), The Equality Act 2020 (formerly DDA) that will afford reasonable access to all areas of the proposed new veterinary centre.

2.2 It is acknowledged that the proposed development presents issues relating to accessibility and inclusion in relation to vertical circulation, which we have addressed in order to meet the obligations imposed by The Equality Act 2020 (formerly DDA).

2.3 Through successful management of the completed building and continual review of its access policy, the client can ensure that any potential sources of discrimination are addressed in both the physical attributes of the buildings it uses and in the management practices and procedures it adopts.

3 CONSULTATION AND SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

Consultations will include the Building Control Approved Inspector with regard to the implementation of Approved Document to Part M of the Building Regulations (2015, incorporating 2020 amendments) and BS 8300: 2018. These are used as the main sources of reference, although not all are relevant to the proposed work.

4 KEY ACCESS ISSUES OF THE DESIGN

4.1 Approach and Car Parking

The existing development is accessible from Langley Lane. Associated reconfiguration and extension of the veterinary centre's car park will allow for formalised spaces to be laid out for use by staff and visitors. The application proposals seek to formalise and extend the existing car parking area, providing a total of 61 no. spaces with 6 no. disabled spaces and 3 no. charging spaces. The works to

reconfigure and extend the car park will provide further benefits to the site, providing a sufficient formalised area for car parking.

4.2 Pedestrian routes and external level change

All approaches are concrete slabbed or Concrete paved with a gentle gradient but not exceeding 1:20 with footways having cross-falls not exceeding 1:60. External lighting will be provided around the buildings and approaches with illumination to 50-100 lux.

4.3 Entrances

The design of the building is intended to make the entrances clearly identifiable. Signage will be used to highlight the entrance door. All doors and frames will be finished with colours to contrast with the cladded surrounds. Entrance matting is recessed flush with the floor and is of an aluminium-ribbed type not to create trip hazards or to impede movement of wheelchairs.

4.4 Horizontal circulation (including doors and corridors)

Corridors and passageways will be designed to be minimum 1200mm unobstructed clear width with level floors. Colour contrast of at least 20 points Light Reflectance Value (LRV) is provided between walls and floors, walls and ceiling. Colour contrast of at least 20 points (LRV) is provided between door/door frames and surrounding walls, door face and leading edge to non self-closing doors and between Ironmongery and doors. Doors generally open into rooms. Doors to accommodation/rooms and toilet entrance lobbies are fitted with low power (30N) self-closing devices. All doors are designed to provide minimum clear opening widths, measured to the face of any protruding ironmongery, to comply with Building Regulations Approved Document part M table 2. Doors on access routes are fitted with vision panels towards the leading edge of the door have vertical dimensions which include at least the minimum zone, or zones of visibility of between 500mm and 1500mm for the floor and if necessary interrupted between 800mm and 1150mm above the floor. Ironmongery door handles are selected to meet the requirements of BS 8300: 2018.

4.5 Vertical Circulation

Guidance is clear under Approved Document M: Volume 2 Buildings other than dwellings 3.21 and 3.22 that “For all buildings, a passenger lift is the most suitable form of access for people moving from one storey to another” although in exceptional circumstances for new developments with particular constraints (e.g. a listed building, or an infill site in a historic town centre), where a passenger lift cannot be accommodated, a vertical lifting platform (platform lift), although not equivalent to a passenger lift, may be considered as an alternative option to provide access for persons with impaired mobility.” The Provisions at Approved Document M: Volume 2 Buildings other than dwellings 3.24 state that “...The provision of lifting devices will satisfy Requirement M1 or M2”.

We understand that the guidance states ideally a lift should be provided in any new development. However, the legal requirement of the regulations is that there shall be reasonable provision for access. Vertical circulation via a lifting device of any kind would be unreasonable in our case based on the current circumstances. The space demand for a lift and associated landings is

disproportionate to the design and use of the building we are seeking to achieve and would not make economic sense. The ground floor is the only floor which will be open to the public therefore it would not be viable to include a lift for vertical circulation between the two floors. We have included a shower at first floor level which will be used by the veterinary staff only, as they regularly carry out procedures that only a physically non-disabled person could undertake. The public do not require use of a shower. Oakhill Veterinary Centre Ltd are an inclusive employer, however the general duties of veterinary staff require most staff other than the admin team to be non-disabled. We have addressed the potential issue of any existing or new administrative staff having a physical disability and being unable to access the first floor by replicating the core facilities on both floors for members of staff. We have an office, meeting rooms and a kitchen on both floors.

To conclude, the ground floor level is the only floor welcoming members of the public, the first floor does not welcome members of the public thus no requirement to make the first floor accessible to them nor would it make sense economically. We have included an accessible WC at ground level which will always be available for public use. However, if in any case a change of use for the building is required in the future, adequate provision has been made for the installation of a lift and first floor refuge point at a later date.

4.6 Sanitary accommodation

A wheelchair accessible toilet is provided at ground level within the office space for staff and/or visitors. The colour scheme will be selected to ensure colour contrast of min 20 points LRV between floor and walls, walls and ceiling, cubicle doors and walls, sanitary ware and walls.

4.7 Information, signage and way finding.

Signage is to be used throughout the facilities to provide information regarding directions for the locations of the following facilities: - Emergency escape routes. Signs are to be bold with high colour contrast between the lettering and between the sign and background. Text is to be in a clear type font utilising upper and lower case lettering. The size of lettering is to be selected to suit appropriate viewing distances in accordance with British Standards and The Sign Design Guide, to comply with the Equality Act 2010. Where possible the use of pictorial diagrams to illustrate facilities available will be employed, for example: male, female and disabled symbols for toilet facilities. The Running man symbol will be used on escape signage in accordance with BS 5499.

5 CONCLUSION

The existing use of the site is a veterinary centre, which is considered appropriate within the rural area. The current site operates as the Head Offices for the business (which has three other sites in Preston) as well as housing the Farm Division, the Equine Ambulatory Division, an Equine Referral Clinic and a Small Animal practice. All divisions of the centre have developed and grown over recent years, with a related increase in staff members. The proposed development would provide new facilities, particularly with respect to providing a dedicated farm vet facility, to support the existing use and provide further services and support for customers from the local area. The design and construction of the proposed two-storey veterinary building (Use Class E) will achieve inclusive access for people of all abilities for employees and visitors.

