

Planning & Design statement

Alterations to fenestration & addition of 2nd floor office space at
15 The Parade
Colchester Road
Romford
RM3 0AQ

1. Introduction:

This application concerns the property at 15 The Parade, Colchester Road, Romford, RM3 0AQ.

Following recent purchase of the property as a new premises for the applicant's fire alarm installation, servicing and monitoring business, the proposal seeks to renovate the existing building and create updated and enlarged office space in line with the requirements of the business.

2. Site context:

The site is located The Parade, a minor side road, adjacent and parallel to the A12 (Colchester Road), a major transport route from London out to Essex and extending beyond into Suffolk. The Parade is characterised by buildings that are largely commercial properties, whilst there are only 3 properties which are solely residential. The distribution of these properties is demonstrated in Image 1 below.

Image 1 – Street Scene: (Source: Google maps)



As can be seen above, 15 The Parade is nestled between 2 of the 3 residential units on the road. The remaining properties along the road comprises commercial units, with a mix of uses from electronics servicing & repairs, take-away food outlets, dental services a daycare/ nursery and offices and storage yards for other building contractors, amongst others.

Historically, No. 15 is likely to have been a residential dwelling at some point in previous use as indicated by it being one half of a semi-detached pair. That said, it is no longer the mirror image of the adjoining property due to various changes and additions to each half of the pair independently of one another, for example, the single storey side addition to the adjoining neighbour, and the large shop-front style window of No. 15 which has been a feature of the property for at least 16 years.

As shown in image 2, the site has been in a commercial use since at least 2008 when it was occupied as a builder's yard for 'Longwood Construction Ltd' and office space for structural engineers 'Clive Adams Associates'. It has also since been home to other construction-based businesses using the building as an office and the land to the rear as a storage yard in similar condition and appearance to the present day.

Image 2 – Site Frontage, Nov 2008: (Source: Google maps/ streetview)



To the left-hand side of the property, there is a 3.2m wide vehicle access leading to the rear storage yard. Historically this has been either an open passage, or gated towards the rear. More recently, the gated entrance has been moved forward in line with the front elevation of no. 15 and the neighbouring property. No. 17. This access serves No. 15 only.

Image 3 – Site Frontage, Jul 2024: (Source: Google maps/ streetview)



3. Planning History:

The site has been subject to a small number of planning applications previously:

- P0139.89 – Approved
 - *Reconstruction to provide self-contained flat at first floor & extend ground floor.*
- P1895.89 – Approved
 - *Amendment to P0139.89 to enlarge store and kitchen.*
- P0482.97 – Approved with conditions
 - *Proposed singles storey rear extension.*
- P0407.18 – Approved with conditions
 - *Change of front facing north elevation to include new entrance door and reconfiguration of stairs / reception area.*
- P0971.24– Refused
 - *Refurbishment to include trade counter, stock room, and office space, with hip to gable roof alteration, rear dormer, alterations to fenestration, and storage outbuilding to rear.*

4. The Proposal:

The proposed development has been amended in response to the recently refused application P0407.24, within which several issues were considered unacceptable, including:

- *Addition of a trade counter would increase vehicle and pedestrian traffic to the site.*
- *Hip-to-gable roof alteration.*
- *Rear dormer.*
- *New storage building within the rear yard would impact amenity for the neighbouring occupiers.*

In order to resolve these issues independently, the new proposal has been divided into two new applications; one to address the proposed rear storage building and this one, for alterations to the main building.

Alterations to the main building:

The major physical changes of the hip-to-gable alterations and rear dormer have been omitted in favour of retaining the existing hipped roof form and instead the only roof alteration is the discreet addition of a pair of rooflights to the front and rear roof slopes. This change respects the mirrored appearance of the hipped roof over the original semi-detached pair, with minimal alteration, whilst providing the applicant with some level of the additional office floor space they seek.

In addition, the trade counter has now been removed from the scope of work, this therefore no longer presents an issue. The building will be used as office space, accessed by a limited number of staff, currently 4 people, with a possible increase to 6.

Fenestration alterations:

It is proposed to alter the fenestration to the front elevation to introduce a new ground floor front entrance with dark grey aluminium framed glazing and a central entrance door. Whilst the property is part of what was originally a semi-detached pair, it is not considered that the proposed alteration will create un-due imbalance in the appearance of the building as the frontage of No.15 is already a relative shop-front style compared to the adjoining neighbour with a large front window and surround that has been used for commercial signage.

It is a common theme of The Parade that all two-storey properties with a commercial use have a shop-front style ground floor frontage and entrance, frames with various colours, with large areas of glazing and signage boarding above the opening (as can be seen in image 4). At first floor level above these properties also have traditional style windows, typically with a white UPVC frame. It is therefore proposed that No.15 follow suit with this style and character.

This alteration will bring the appearance of the building up to date with a modern and more aesthetically pleasing appearance over and above the existing frontage. The design replicates the frontage style of the business's existing office, a photo of which is shown in image 5 as a real-world example of the proposed style.

Image 4 – Existing street scene along The Parade: (Source: Google maps)



Image 5 – Existing office frontage as an example of the proposed fenestration: (Source: Blue Lava Architecture)



Parking:

Employment locations in Outer London areas with acknowledged lower provision of public transport (such as Havering) should be provided with 1 space per 50-100m² of floor space.

The proposed gross internal floor area including new storage building is as follows:

Storage building = 67.5 m²

Ground Floor = 63.7 m²

First Floor = 34.8 m²

Second Floor = 10.5 m²

Total GIA = 176.5 m²

Therefore, the site will be provided with 2 spaces as a minimum, however, the yard to the rear will provide opportunity for parking additional cars if required, which will assist in accommodating staff vehicles off-road if they are unable to make use of public transport, this is considered a positive as it will mitigate any additional car parking impact that may otherwise be created on The Parade or the surrounding roads.

The proposed parking provision for the previous application was considered acceptable by the highways department, therefore it is anticipated that this will also be the case for this application.

Archaeology:

A desktop Archaeology report has been carried out by Brindle and Green and is submitted with this application. The report, which identified the potential for impact as moderate due to the proximity to the A12 Colchester Road, which is an ancient Roman road.

It is acknowledged that ground works required for the foundation of the proposed rear storage building may require excavation works that will disturb the ground, however, as far as this application is concerned there will be no archaeological impact. The proposed works relating to the fenestration alterations and additional offices in the roof space are all above-ground works and will not require any excavation or ground disturbance.

The supporting statement accompanying the application specific to the proposed storage building goes into more detail about the possible options to mitigate the disturbance of anything of archaeological interest in that case.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

Mayoral CIL contributions are required under the CIL regulations for any development with proposed additional floor area in excess of 100 m². The proposed additional floor area comprises both that of the storage building and proposed office space in the main building dealt with under a separate application.

The total proposed Gross internal area is as follows:

Storage building = 67.5 m²

Proposed Second Floor = 10.5 m²

Total increase = 78 m²

Therefore, a CIL charge is not applicable to the proposed development as the proposed GIA to be created is less than 100 m².

Other issues:

In relation to the side access, the officer's report for application P0971.24 stated that:

'The submitted photos shows [sic] that No. 17 has a side access gate and fencing to the side of their property adjacent to the access of no. 15.

This fate [sic] and fencing is not shown on the submitted plans and it shown [sic] that a gate will be added. This gate has not been included within the proposal and there is a discrepancy from the photos provided and that shown on the plans'

This is unfortunately incorrect given that the plans submitted with the application identified the gates on both the existing and proposed site plans (dwg no. 100) and on each elevation shown on the existing and proposed elevations (dwg no.s 103 & 104 respectively), they were also visible on the submitted photos of the front and rear of the property.

As mentioned in the Site Context section, this side access serves No. 15 only. No. 17 benefits from it's own access gate to the right hand side of that property respectively.

5. **Summary:**

The amended proposal within this application has been carefully considered following the refusal of the previous application P0971.24. The proposal now addresses all previous reasons for refusal relating to the alterations to the main building, including:

- ***Impact of hip-to-gable alteration and rear dormer creating a top-heavy appearance.***
 - These features have now been omitted from the scheme and are no longer an issue.
- ***Unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance may be created by the addition of a trade counter.***
 - This feature has now been omitted from the scheme and is no longer an issue.

With the revisions that have been made and set out in this statement, it is considered that the amended proposal should within this application should not be considered contentious as the previous application. Therefore, it is kindly requested that the application be supported by the local authority and considered favourably for approval.