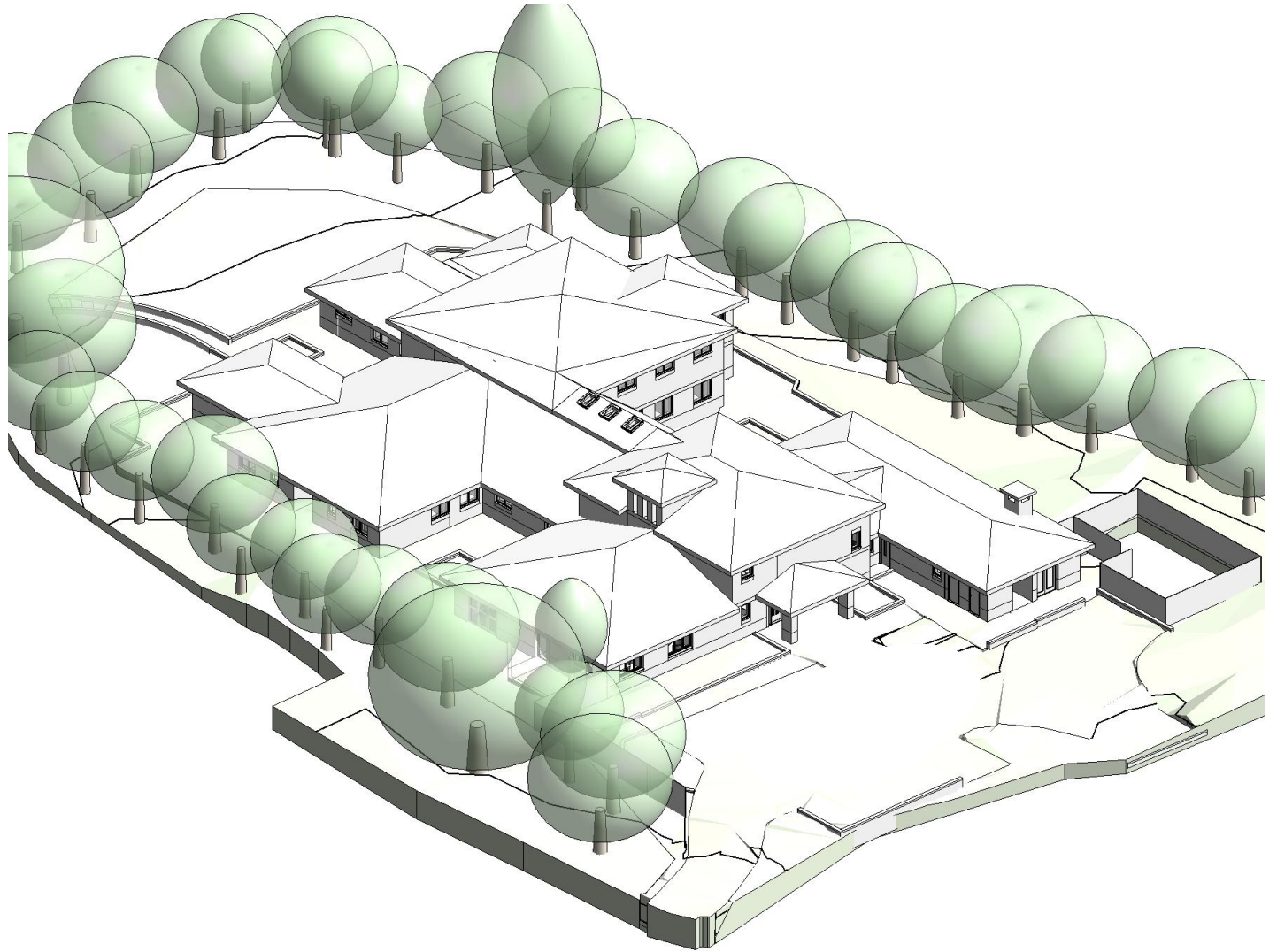




DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LEOPOLD COURT

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council to accompany their full planning application for the remodelling and refurbishment of one of their existing buildings, Leopold Court; which currently provides temporary accommodation and associated support services, including emergency beds for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The proposed development increases the building's capacity to 29 standard bedrooms, including one Category 3 wheelchair-accessible bedroom on each floor (two in total), together with an additional emergency bedroom.

The scheme includes a modest extension and minor infill areas within the existing footprint. No change of use, increase in overall scale or height is proposed, nor will the development alter the established relationship with neighbouring properties. The proposals seek to enhance safety, security, operational efficiency, and the overall quality of accommodation for tenants and staff, in alignment with Rochdale Borough Council's planning policy objectives.

The development also includes:

- Replacement of all external windows and doors
- Resurfacing of existing external areas.
- Minor landscape works - fencing & gates
- New site access gates
- New and upgraded external lighting.

Location & Site Context

The site is located in Rochdale, within an established residential and mixed-use area. It is bounded by Rochdale Sports Club to the north and west, and Bury Road to the south. The surrounding properties are predominantly residential, with community and service buildings situated within the wider area.

The north-east to south-west of the site either side of Bury Road is largely residential, with roads branching off Bury Road either side of the site.

To the west of the site, off Bury Road, there is a garage/shipping storage area accessed from Landsdowne Street. This area separates the site boundary from the Rochdale Sports Club football grounds. There is no site access from Landsdowne Street, as the fence line does not accommodate gated access into the Leopold Court site - the curved footpath in this location is therefore redundant as a means of access.

The site is accessed directly from Leopold Street, which branches off Bury Road to the south-east. A pair of existing brick piers defines the vehicular and pedestrian entrance. The red-line boundary includes the existing building and is owned by Rochdale MBC. The total site area is approximately 0.39ha.

The building is positioned centrally within the plot and is surrounded by hardstanding areas, a car park, refuse storage, boundary treatments, and modest landscaped zones.



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Existing Building

Leopold Court is a mixed single- and two-storey brick building characterised by a series of pitched, Roman-tiled roofs. A substantial proportion of the accommodation is single-storey, with the ground floor accommodating staff offices, training rooms, homeless accommodation, and communal facilities. The first floor comprises two separate accommodation blocks located on the east and west sides of the building, linked by a central spine corridor illuminated by overhead rooflights. Each first-floor block is served by its own staircore: one positioned adjacent to the main entrance on the east elevation, and the other located toward the north-east corner, each contained within the respective accommodation block.

Constructed in 1970, the building is of traditional construction and currently provides housing and support services for individuals experiencing homelessness. However, much of the internal fabric and mechanical and electrical services have become outdated and require upgrading to meet modern standards. The internal layout also requires reorganisation to ensure the building can operate efficiently and effectively for both tenants and staff.

Externally, the windows and doors require replacement to comply with current Building Regulations, improve thermal performance, and enhance overall security. The landscaping, car park, and site entrance also require a general refresh to improve accessibility, appearance, and site security.

Proposals

Internal Remodelling / Extension & Infill Areas

The proposed internal layout has been reconfigured to create a more coherent and functional plan - organised into clearly defined zones for staff operations, resident accommodation (including emergency and accessible bedrooms), and communal spaces.

All resident bedrooms are now located to the west of the building, positioned furthest from the main entrance and separated from the reception, staff areas, and training rooms. To accommodate the improved layout and additional bedrooms, the existing footprint will be extended and infilled at the north-west corner. A small additional infill is also proposed within the staff area to form a new server/records office between the main office and the reception area.

The Hearth 'residents lounge and kitchen,' is positioned centrally within the plan, acting as a clear transition point between the public-facing spaces and the more private accommodation areas. This central hub provides a natural focal point for residents and supports intuitive wayfinding throughout the building.

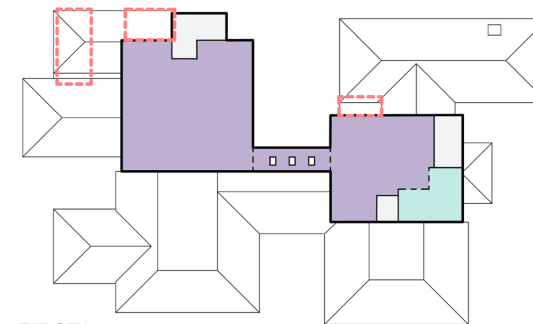
Staff offices and the reception desk are positioned to the east and north sides of the building, adjacent to the main entrance, east stair, and lift. Their location provides effective passive supervision of key movement routes and The Hearth, supporting operational oversight and resident safety.

The first floor has the option to operate as a female-only accommodation level. Alongside the full refurbishment of the existing rooms, this floor will include a new Female Lounge and Kitchenette to provide a safe and dedicated communal space.

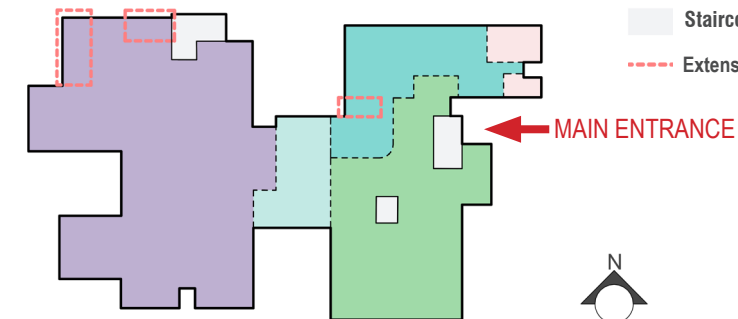
LEOPOLD COURT

PROPOSALS

- Bedrooms
- The Hearth
'Residents Lounge and kitchen'
- First-floor
'Female Lounge & Kitchenette'
- Communal Areas
- Staff Offices & Reception
- Plant
- Staircores & Lift
- Extension / Infill Areas



FIRST



GROUND



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LEOPOLD COURT

External Fabric

There are no proposed changes to the scale of the building, which will retain its existing massing and overall visual impact. The proposed extension and infill works have been designed to integrate with the existing fabric, matching brickwork, roof finishes, and associated rainwater goods to ensure a consistent appearance.

In addition, the proposals include the installation of thermally efficient UPVC windows, secure external composite or glazed UPVC doors, and metal-louvred doors for plant and external storage areas, enhancing both performance and security.

Landscaping

The proposed works are modest in scale and focus primarily on refreshing the external environment while preserving the site's established layout and character. Landscaping interventions are minimal, with no tree removal, no additional planting proposed, and no alterations to the existing landscape structure. Improvements are concentrated around the front entrance on the east elevation, providing a subtle enhancement and upgrade to the area without altering its overall form or appearance.

Access, Parking, and Site Security

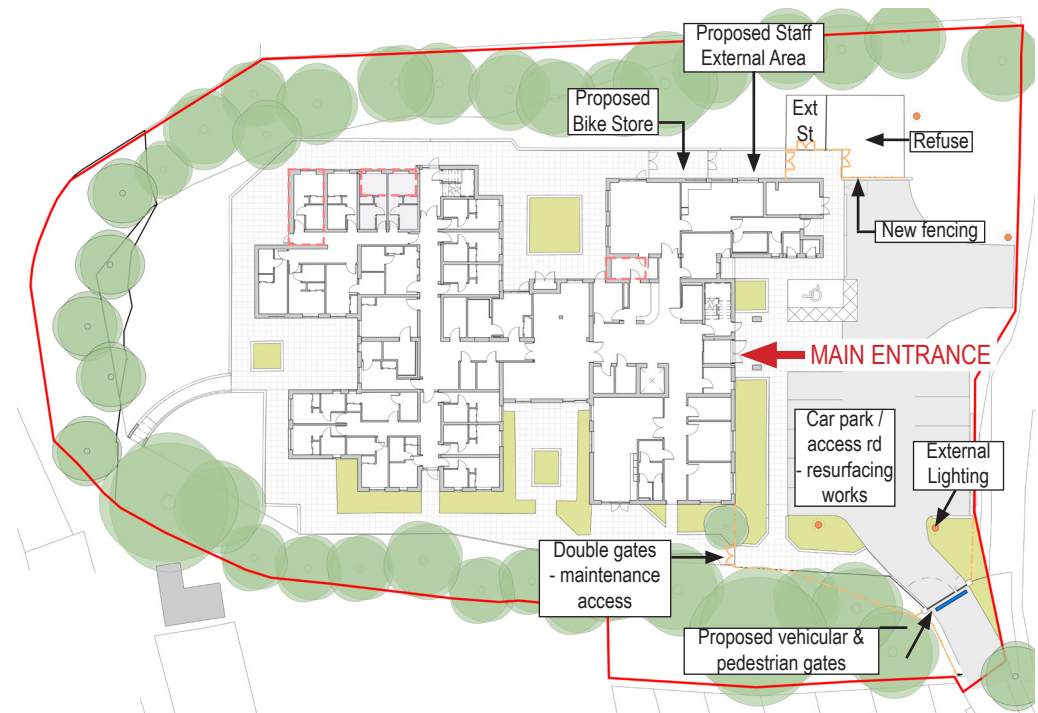
The existing car park and access route adjacent to the site entrance will be resurfaced to improve safety and durability. At the main entrance, new automatic vehicle and pedestrian gates are proposed, supported by upgraded controlled-access systems. A single side maintenance gate will be replaced with double gates to improve operational access, and new fencing and gates will be installed around the existing refuse and external storage areas.

A small private external staff area and secure fenced bicycle storage will be introduced adjacent to the main office on the north elevation, providing improved facilities without altering the broader landscape. Non-intrusive, low-spill external lighting will be upgraded or replaced around the car park and building frontage to enhance safety while remaining sensitive to the surrounding residential context and wildlife habitats.

Vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements will benefit from improved controlled entry, including fob-operated systems for both vehicles and pedestrians, overseen by office-managed control where required. Emergency and refuse access arrangements will remain unchanged.

The proposals do not increase staff or visitor numbers, traffic movements, or parking demand. The existing car park will be retained in its current configuration, with the addition of resurfacing and secure staff bicycle storage. As such, there is no intensification of use in transport terms.

Site safety and security are significantly enhanced through a combination of improved low-spill lighting, controlled fob access at key entry points, secure replacement windows, PAS24-compliant external doors, and strengthened boundary access measures. Together, these improvements create a safer and more welcoming environment for staff, residents, and the wider community while ensuring the site remains sensitive to its surrounding context.



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LEOPOLD COURT

Surveys

Surveys have been undertaken in support of the application, including the following environmental assessments:

Arboricultural

A full Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared by SEED Arboricultural Ltd to support the planning application. The assessment provides a baseline survey of the existing perimeter trees within the site boundary, including a Tree Schedule and Tree Constraints Plan. The report evaluates the direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development on the existing trees and, where applicable, provides details of mitigation measures and tree protection.

Ecology

Collington Winter Environmental Ltd have been commissioned to undertake ecological surveys, included within the supporting documentation for the planning submission:

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA): Assesses notable species and their habitats within the building and surrounding site, with recommendations for further survey work, assessments, and ecological enhancements.

Bat Survey Report: Conducted as recommended in the PEA, this includes recommended actions regarding potential disturbance to bats and precautionary working methods, ensuring compliance with wildlife legislation and minimising risk to protected species.

A **BNG De Minimis Exemption Statement** is included within the supporting documentation - further to the results of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Baseline Survey, the proposed development has been confirmed as exempt from a BNG assessment or biodiversity metric calculation.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposals deliver improved accommodation, enhanced safeguarding provisions, and greater operational efficiency through:

- Creating a more coherent and operationally efficient internal layout
- Providing additional bedrooms
- Including emergency accommodation
- Renewing and upgrading the internal fabric and building services
- Replacing external windows and doors
- Improving external access arrangements, security, lighting, and the entrance/car park area

These enhancements significantly improve the quality, safety, and suitability of the building for its ongoing use, while ensuring it retains its established character and integrates sensitively within the surrounding residential context.

No change of use is proposed. Leopold Court will continue to operate as supported accommodation for individuals experiencing homelessness, providing safe, high-quality facilities that meet modern standards and better support both staff and residents.

PROJECT TEAM

CLIENT
PROECT MANAGER
ARCHITECTS
QUANTITY SURVEYOR
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
CIVIL ENGINEERS
MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS
INTERIOR DESIGNERS
ECOLOGISTS
CDM

Rochdale Council
Bradshaw Gass & Hope
Triangle Architects
Bradshaw Gass & Hope
Bradshaw Gass & Hope
Bradshaw Gass & Hope
Robert Whetham Associates
DV8 Designs
Collington Winter Environmental
Bradshaw Gass & Hope