

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Specsavers Opticians, 5,7,9 Commerce Way, Garden Square Shopping Centre, Letchworth SG6 3DN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement is in support of the above site for: Proposed alterations to shopfront, proposed removal of side elevation access door & installation of 17 AC condenser units.

Use: The unit is situated on the Letchworth high street within Garden Square Shopping Centre, neighboured by various other retailers. It is currently a vacant retail unit, and following relocation works it will trade as Specsavers, remaining retail use.

2.0 DESIGN

2.1 Internal Works

The internal works proposed, are to fit the retail unit out for use as a Specsavers store. The internal works mainly comprise of removing the previous tenants' fittings, and installing new stud walls and wall linings to form the new store layout. The ceiling will be in the form of a suspended ceiling system, and the ceiling void will carry much of the services and cable runs installed. The flooring will be prepared prior to the new carpet and vinyl flooring areas being installed. Structural walls and columns will be lined out to protect them and hide services.

2.2 External Alterations

A section of the existing shopfront construction (window frames and double door-set) will be removed and replaced with a new fully glazed window design. The existing shopfront has an oversized external lobby area and door arrangement that is not required as there is already another access door to this elevation. The existing arrangement will be removed and replaced with a new aluminium frame window design (frames finished basalt grey). The new design will better match the proportions of the shopfront and help tidy up this front elevation of the building, as it does not require 2 access doors to the front elevation. An access door to the rear is also being bricked up as it is not required moving forward, as there are others doors already at the rear, and it will improve security.

2.3 AC Design

There will also be 17no. new AC condenser units installed to the property. 13 Condenser units will be installed to the wall of the first-floor flat roof area. 4 condenser units will be installed at ground floor level to the wall of the rear side elevation on cantilever brackets.

Typical AC condenser units, design and position of the units has been carried out by a specialist. Our client always seeks the advice of independent Air Conditioning specialists, to provide the most efficient AC installation, aiming to use the minimum units possible to comply. The proposed AC units are essential to ensure temperature and fresh air flow is maintained within the medical test rooms. The 17 new condenser units are required for the large site to serve the circulation spaces over 2 floors and the 14 new medical test rooms that are being created during the internal refurbishment / remodel.

Legislation for medical care dictates that Individual AC units are required for each test room and the customer circulation spaces to ensure fresh air flow with the interior temperature being kept constant for the delicate equipment and testing procedures used throughout the store.

Test rooms cannot have windows or external vents installed as they need to be pitch black for the optical testing procedures, therefore multiple AC systems are required for ventilation and circulation of fresh clean air within the test rooms. Dual units cannot be used as they cannot heat and cool at the same time, therefore if one room required heating and the other cooling at the same time, a dual unit could not achieve this, hence why individual units are required for separate rooms.

Without the proposed AC layout and condenser units, the new test rooms would not meet the standards set out in their NHS contract agreement, and therefore could not be used. Please see the project specific drawings attached as a part of this application for further details.

2.4 Layout

The relationship between the buildings within and outside the application site will not change as a result of this application. The proposals have been designed to match the existing, previous tenants' installation, to give continuity. The store layout has been designed around the existing services, to avoid alteration.

2.5 Scale

The scale of the proposals is as existing. No extension or footprint increase will occur. The scale of the proposed signage will mimic that of the previous tenant's design, and the neighbouring designs.

3.0 ACCESS

Pedestrian access will be altered to the front elevation with one set of double doors being removed and replaced with just a window. The front elevation currently has 2 access doors, where only one is required. We feel this alteration will improve security to the units whilst remaining compliant.

Access to the rear is also being altered with one door-set being bricked up. Much like the front elevation, there are multiple escape/access doors in situ, where only one is required moving forward.

Vehicular access will remain as existing, no alterations as a result of this application.

4.0 NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The installation of 17 condenser units is the only element of the proposals that may increase noise levels to neighbouring properties.

There are no clear residential properties in close proximity due to this being a shopping centre location within the retail/commercial district. The rear of the property is used as a car park for multiple properties during the day/night, and is a busy and noisy area during trading hours.

The proposed plant will also only be operational during trading hours (08:00am – 18:30pm) and will not be operation overnight due to automatic shut-off systems being installed to the system.

The proposed units are modern designs, but small-scale installations, with a low sound pressure (max 57 dBA) which is similar to that of a domestic dish washer's output, so will clearly operate bellow any background noise levels in such a busy commercial area. The units also operate intermittently, only functioning when heating or cooling, therefore they are not operational for much of the day.

It is our belief that due to these factors the proposed condenser units will not impact on the surrounding properties, and therefore no additional surveys are required in this instance.

5.0 PHOTOS



Image shows the side elevation access door which is to be bricked up



Image shows the first floor flat roof where 13 of the condensers will be installed