

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT (Supporting Information)

Regeneration of Redundant Retail Premises as Branch Veterinary Clinic

Client	Dragon Veterinary Centre
Client Address	Prestbury Park, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, GL50 4SH
Design	James M Wishart & Associates
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Proposal	Upgrade the premises with replacement windows, 2 rear fire doors, improved parking, new bin store, upgraded side access.
Premises Location	8a & 8b Sopwith Road, Upper Rissington, GL54 2NL
JMWA Job No:	WA758 Doc Ref: WA758-Dragon-DAS

1.0. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1. Dragon Veterinary Centre

Dragon Veterinary Centre (DVC) is a well established veterinary practice with a main hospital base in Cheltenham and further branches in Charlton Kings and Tewkesbury. Their aim is to provide high quality veterinary services within local communities with the back-up of a Veterinary Hospital as their central base.

DVC have acquired the redundant convenience store at 8 a & b Sopwith Road, Upper Rissington and achieved a change of use planning consent (20 April 2018 - 17/05200/FUL). to convert the premises to create a veterinary clinic to cater for the local community.

This application is to sort out the issue like replacement windows, adding rear fire exits and improving the current car parking. These will be explained below.

1.2. Veterinary Premises

As anyone who has visited a broad-service veterinary practice will know, the veterinary premises is quite different to other medical facilities. The vet has the reception, waiting room and consulting rooms like the GP, and all its administration. Beyond that is the diagnostic facilities such as laboratory equipment and X-Ray, then pre-surgery preparation and the operating theatre. In

addition, there has to be accommodation for animal patients for medical and post-operative care, ideally in separate species wards.

The Dragon Vets branch at Upper Rissington has been designed as a full-facility day-case clinic for companion animals. This will be capable of examining and treating most animals as out-patients and be capable of a wide range of day-case surgical procedures; the vast majority of veterinary work. Pets requiring surgery will be admitted in the morning and discharge by late that afternoon. Except in emergencies, cases requiring longer in-patient case will be transferred to the main hospital in Cheltenham.

Cases diagnosed with more complex requirements, or for services such as an MRI scan, will be referred to the main hospital at Cheltenham following initial consultation at Upper Rissington.

The conversion design presented for 8 a & b Sopwith Road provides the required internal facilities for veterinary use.

2.0. UPPER RISSINGTON

2.1. Background

Upper Rissington has an RAF history, being centred around housing developed for staff at the Central Flying School. The housing was sold to a developer who modernised the properties and sold them on, fuelling and expansion of the local area. In some ways the centre of the village has moved following new residential developments and the creation of a local focus providing services to the other Rissington villages and surrounding area.

The new village centre has various retail and other facilities, including a relocated co-operative convenience store, leaving the former co-op store, on Sopwith Road, vacant, which it has been for a number of years.

2.2. Former Co-op Store

The vacant store was, originally, created from a pair of semi-detached RAF houses facing Sopwith Road, located between the junctions of either end of Farman Crescent. The Semi-detached houses were knocked together and extended to the north to create the retail space, and to the east for preparation and storage. On the south side there is a car park with access onto Farman Crescent.

It is difficult to assess the various stages of development but the building has been as it now appears for many years.

Having been vacant for some time and suffered vandalism and water damage from burst pipes, the building, internally, is in need of a complete refit, including wiring, plumbing, insulation, etc. In addition, window frames are in a poor condition and many are single glazed. Despite this, the building, though in a sorry state, is not unattractive.



2.3. Veterinary Conversion

For the veterinary conversion the ground floor will house the waiting and consulting rooms (out-patients) in much of the former retail area, and the rear store will house the In-patient facilities with separate cat and dog day wards, x-ray, preparation and theatre.

The first floor will accommodate staff facilities, such as a kitchen and lounge. Part of the existing flat will be upgraded to form a single bedroom flat which can be used as ancillary staff accommodation or an emergency overnight facility.

3.0. ACCESSIBILITY

3.1. Entrance

Client access to the building will be via the existing doorway, though this will be replaced with a new door and inner lobby for animal security. The glazed entrance area will also help the receptionist see if anyone needs help with cat carriers or infirm pets.

The entrance will be an easy opening, single leaf door, but not automatic as such doors allow animal escape and, if powered, can dog trap tails, etc.

3.2. Toilet Facilities

Close to the entrance there is to be a unisex WC with full wheelchair accessibility. Whilst client access toilets tend to have low usage they are a very useful asset in this type of location and avoid the need for clients to enter areas restricted for biosecurity.

3.3. Reception Counter

The reception counter is dual height for a seated receptionist to serve a standing client. The counter will have a low area to service wheelchair users. This area will hinge upward, allowing service for people who find the fixed counter difficult, or need help within the waiting room.

3.4. Zoned Seating Areas

The waiting room will be set out to provide various areas to separate species: dogs, cats, others.



Waiting Areas

3.5. Partially Sighted

Strongly contrasting door furniture and other fittings will be used to aid people with sight impairments throughout the public access areas of the centre.

3.6. Consulting Rooms

The consulting room door will be 835 mm wide which should give access to virtually all persons. Those with more restricted movement will be offered alternative access to services, if necessary, a home visits.

The consulting rooms have been purpose designed to give adequate space for dealing with all types of domestic pet. These rooms will each have a hand-wash basin, data points, and a direct link to the consulting supply area, which is linked to the main dispensary and reception.

3.7. Animal Wards

The proposed premises will give separate wards for cats and dogs.



Typical Cat Ward

3.8. Preparation Area

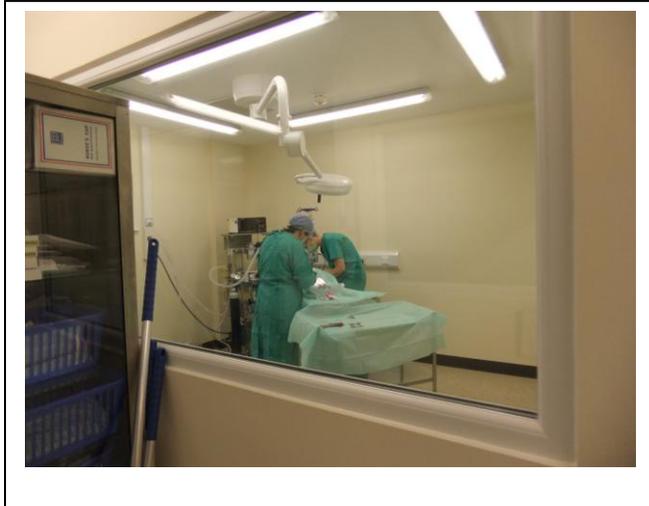
The preparation area will house specific work areas, such as the instrument preparation area with sterile cupboards to supply the theatres with instruments.



Part of a modern veterinary surgical preparation area looking through to the operating room beyond.

3.9. Operating Theatres

The operating theatre is for sterile procedures.



Sterile Operating Theatre

3. 10. Other Facilities

The practice will also have a dedicated x-ray room for radiological procedures and, where required, other scans.

3.11. Building Access

Unaccompanied client access will be restricted to the reception and waiting area. Accompanied, they will have access to the consulting rooms and, by appointment, may be able to visit their in-patient pets subject to clinical assessment.

These access rules, to the main part, are required to comply with the Veterinary Medicines' Regulations. In addition, should non-employees be permitted in other parts of the practice there could be issues of confidentiality, animal welfare, and their personal safety. This would be particularly so if they gained unaccompanied access to animal wards.

4.0. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

4.1. Regeneration

The regeneration of this building will restore and enhance the overall appearance of the area. Conversion work is mostly internal and will not radically alter the street view.

4.2. Practice Development

The proposed conversion will allow the veterinary centre to offer a wide range of pet care services to local residents, meaning there will be few occasions where pets need further referral.

The practice will aim to be at the standard of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme level of General Practice, one step down from RCVS Hospital Status.

4.3. Car Parking & Vehicle Movements

4.3.1. Existing Consent

The April 2018 planning consent (17/05200/FUL) required 7 car parking spaces and three motorcycle spaces. In addition, there are two existing bicycle places.

4.3.2. Improved Parking

This application improves the parking by relocating the existing the bin area and storage compound away from the original Co-op car park, restoring a full 10 car spaces; one of which will be adjusted for disabled drivers.

Parking for client motorcycles is relocated to the front area, though it is very unlikely that veterinary clients would turn up on a motorbike. Any staff motorcycles will be housed within the locked area, behind the fence to the rear. This area is more secure and has flexibility of space.

Likewise, staff bicycles will be stored within the locked area.

4.3.3. Traffic Movements

Client vehicles

Traffic movements and client flow is determined by the periods of the day designated for consultations and those times reserved for day-patient treatments. Dragon Vets work on all appointment clinics, meaning there is no peak times. Client movements are spread out fairly evenly over the consulting hours and very few at other work times.

With consultations averaging around 15 minutes, client movements should be well within the capacity of the revised car park.

Deliveries, etc.

The only potential daily delivery, apart from the postman, could be from the veterinary wholesaler. Such deliveries are in mid-range vans of some up to 2.5 tonnes (larger Ford Transit sized) and the deliver takes 3-5 minutes.

4.4. Bin Area

The Co-operative store had taken an area of the car park to create an enclosed compound, believed to be for a chiller unit, and as a bin storage area. This restricted the car parking to the level presented on SK_01 in the April 2018 application.

During the conveyance to Dragon Vets it was noticed that the only access to the rear garden was through the building. At the time, with no access door. Negotiations permitted an access area from outside and, with careful design, this had allowed space to move the bin store and restore the original cart park. In addition, it means that the routine commercial waste can be stored behind locked gates, secure and out of sight.

4.5. Disposals

The majority of waste from veterinary premises consists of low volumes of office waste, domestic style waste from basic refreshments, and packaging, etc. This will be disposed of via a local contractor or Local Authority service and recyclable waste will be separated as requested.

The other disposals from veterinary premises are small volumes of waste falling into three categories outlined below. These are stored and separated, inside the premises, and housed in specialised containers. This waste is removed by a specialist contractor using a 'Transit' sized van

Waste categories

- i. Sharps – used scalpel blades and needles.
- ii. Pharmaceutical – empty medicine bottles, etc.
- iii. Clinical – soiled animal bedding, used swabs, etc.

5.0. BUILDING ALTERATIONS

5.1. Veterinary Layout

The proposed veterinary layout is presented on the enclosed floor plans. This divides the building into the specialist workstations and clinical areas, bearing in mind Royal College requirements on biosecurity and hygiene.

5.2. Windows

All windows are to be replaced with up-rated UPC double glazed units. On the first floor these will be, as near as practicable, like-for-like designs.

On the frontage, the 'shop windows' will be changed with the sills 300mm higher and central pillars in the longer window runs, to give the premises a more professional appearance and to permit seating to be against the windows inside. The brickwork for the raised sills will be rendered and painted to match the existing style.

5.3. Staff Access

On the south elevation there is an odd access point with double wooden gates. This is to be converted to a single door and matching rendered wall and will be the main staff access and point for any inward deliveries, keeping the reception area clear for clients.

5.4. Rear Fire Exits

Two fire exits will be inserted into the existing rear wall, with access into the garden. These are primarily Building Regulations requirements due to the creation of more smaller work-spaces within the premises. They will also provide safe external access to access bins, etc.

5.5. Air Conditioning

The existing ground floor has air conditioning with external units on the rear wall, hidden by the boundary fence. Dragon Vets propose to replace this system with an upgraded system using air source heat pumps and more efficient climate control. As before, the units will be hidden from view by the boundary fence.

6.0. FIRST FLOOR

6.1. Existing Flat

The first floor flat is believed to have been let as a residential dwelling, separate to the shop below. It is in a poor decorative state and has suffered from roof leaks caused by vandalism over the vacant period and will deteriorate further if left unused. Dragon Vets, therefore, intend to alter the first floor into staff facilities and potential ancillary accommodation.

6.2. Proposed First Floor

An internal access door is being included so part of the first floor can be used as a staff kitchen and lounge. The remainder of the existing flat will be converted into a small but self contained flat. This can provide very useful accommodation for practice staff as and when required. This could be a duty nurse, assistant vet working at Rissington, locum

accommodation, or help should an overnight emergency occur. It should also help with general security.

Such use will not affect parking as the accommodation would be for staff and this application increases parking by 30%.

7.0. REAR BOUNDARY FENCE

7.1. Rear Boundary Fence

The existing rear area is totally enclosed with a close-boarded timber fence some 2 metres high. This fence is rotten and, in fact, a good deal of it is missing. This fence will be completely replaced with new access gates into the car park, as per the plans.

Notes prepared by Jim Wishart. February 2019