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Site location plan - Site for the waterpark highlighted in red
Introduction

Document Structure

The structure of this document is based on the guidelines described in ‘Design and Access Statements - How to Write, Read and Use Them’ published by the Commission for Architecture in the Built Environment in 2006.

This document should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings and the other information submitted in support of the Full Application for Planning Permission.

Outline of the Project

This statement has been prepared by FaulknerBrowns Architects on behalf of Coventry City Council, the site owner and applicant for the proposed leisure facility.

This application seeks approval to:

- To demolish the existing Spire House building.
- The construction of a leisure and waterpark facility and surrounding external works
- Removal of three trees to the western edge of the site, around Christchurch Spire, needed to construct the proposed building and to as part of the masterplan enhancement and proposed external works around the facility.

Following the planning application period it is proposed that demolition of the existing Spire House would commence almost immediately in October 2016.

The construction of the new building would commence in March 2017 with a planned completion for September 2018.
Introduction

The Applicants’ Team has undertaken careful analysis of the various aspects of the site and its context that have an influence on the design of the new building— including its historic and physical setting within the local area and the Applicants’ objectives.

1.1 Site Location

Current Context

The application site is located to the south west of Coventry city centre bounded by Greyfriars Lane, New Union Street and The Methodist Central Hall.

The site is owned by Coventry City Council and bounded by areas of adopted highway.

The proposed site is currently filled by Spire House which is to be demolished as part of the application. The existing building is generally three/four storeys with corner towers of eight storeys with the ground floor level set above street level and a basement car park. The building forms a near square, urban block faced in horizontally layered windows and brown brickwork.

The site has a cross fall of approximately 1.5m from the north, +85.5m AOD to the south, +84.0m AOD.

Site Description and Physical Context

The application site forms a key node within Coventry city centre. The diagram opposite highlights the sites position:

- naturally to the end of the green sweeping link from Coventry station, enhanced as part of the Friarsgate development across the Ringway, via Greyfriars Green and Bull Yard.
- between the Greyfriars Green and High Street / Hill Top conservation areas
- to the western edge of the City South for which there are proposals for redevelopment around Bull Yard.

The site is bound by New Union Street to the south and Greyfriars Lane to the east and north. The western edge of the site opens towards Bull Yard and Warwick Road has the feeling of a city park with a collection of trees, grass and well used seating areas.

New Union Street also provides bus stop areas as part of the Warwick Street loop off the City Ringway providing significant footfall to the site.

Christchurch Spire is immediately adjacent to the west of the site housing a café/ restaurant that utilises the external public realm. Other significant buildings around the sites perimeter include the Methodist Central Hall, Ford’s Hospital almshouses (sheltered accommodation), the British Telecom Exchange and The Squirrel, public house.
Historic Context

The site is dominated by the Grade II listed Christchurch Spire, one of the ‘three spires’ of Coventry. The spire is a later addition to the original tower of Greyfriars Franciscan Friary which once occupied the site and is now the only remnant of Christchurch.

The proposals seek to improve the setting of the spire within the urban and pedestrian realm. Specific regard will be given to the existing mature trees and improvement of the site’s landscape and public environment.

Close to the site’s northern boundary is the Grade I listed Ford’s Hospital almshouses. The site is located between the three conservation areas of Greyfrairs Green, High Street and Hill Top creating a key urban node between the two historic zones.

Further explanation of the site history and heritage impact of the proposals are described in the Heritage Report that forms part of this application.

1.2 Masterplan Context

Coventry City Council have commissioned a masterplan exercise to be carried out for the surrounding area to understand the wider contextual influence and the role that the proposed site will play within it. The masterplan study is included as part of this application.

A principle design challenge is the integration of the building into the existing public realm and the potential that it has as a catalyst for further regeneration. The application includes indicative proposals for the landscape around the facility, and Christchurch Spire. It is the intention that detailed design external works proposals will be subject to a planning condition to be submitted at a later date.

1.3 Planning Context

In developing the proposal for the site, due regard has been given to relevant national, strategic and local planning policies, as well as other material considerations.

This includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was adopted in March 2012.

The NPPF is part of the Government’s reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible to communities and local authorities.

The NPPF replaces existing national planning policy guidance and statements, with the exception of Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management, with a single more concise document.

The proposals seek to align with the objectives set out in the Coventry Local Plan and City Centre Area Action Plan draft documents (January 2016) that have been submitted to the Secretary of State on 1st April 2016.

For further information regarding the planning context please refer to the Planning Statement that forms part of this application.
Land Use

The site falls within Coventry City Centre and is therefore the preferred location for leisure, retail and civic uses in accordance with the sequential test set out in the NPPF.

Locating high trip-generating uses in areas with the highest public transport capacity is a key theme of national planning policy (the NPPF), but also within all tiers of regional planning policy.

The principle of a major leisure facility on this site is considered to be in accordance with national, regional and local policy.

Design

Achieving a high quality of design is a central theme of national, strategic and local planning policies, and has been a key consideration in the evolution of the development proposals.

One of the core principles of the NPPF (set out in paragraph 17) is:

(always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings)

Aligned with this Coventry City Council seeks to deliver a transformational scheme that will enhance and enliven the existing city centre.

Along with a considered approach during the design stage the development will seek to improve the character and appearance of the local area in its scale and design. Through the provision of high standards of inclusive design a scheme that is accessible to those who require access to it whilst also being safe and secure as a major contribution to the wider community will be delivered.

Sustainability

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which comprises three strands - economic, social and environmental. One of the NPPF’s core principles is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

In addition to this the applicants set an aspiration to achieve varying success factors that the design solution seeks to deliver.

The project will be considered a success if:

• the building is delivered on time and on budget
• the local community welcome, embrace and cherish the building
• it is a catalyst for further investment in Coventry City Centre
• the building can be simply and economically managed and maintained

The proposed development has been designed to have regard to both policy and the applicants aspiration.
1.4 Social Context and Existing Facilities

The new water park and leisure destination facility will replace the existing Housing Association Offices currently occupying the site. It is hoped that the new development will become a central catalyst promoting further development and regeneration in the surrounding areas.

The proposed building will become a new landmark development within the city centre acting as a new destination and community meeting place. The new facility will promote a lifestyle of health and well-being and add to the successful mix of sports and leisure facilities within Coventry.

1.5 Economic Context

The project has been a long term ambition for Coventry City Council and with appropriate funding now in place, the Coventry Water Park seeks to deliver a building design solution that is completed on time and within budget with a longer term aspiration to act as a catalyst for further investment in Coventry City Centre.

1.6 Environmental Context

The design has considered the existing environmental context in its development and has sought to improve the condition of the landscape where possible, including the introduction of a new public realm and green spaces.

Design decisions have been informed by Ecological, Arboricultural and Heritage surveys and consideration has been given towards the potential impacts on daylight, wind and noise. The reports are included as part of this application.

The development proposes the removal of some existing trees. The value of the trees and the impact of their removal has been appraised in the Arboricultural Statement that is included as part of the application.
1.7 Community Involvement

Coventry City Council are seeking to promote a development that responds positively to the aspirations and requirements of the local community.

The community consultation strategy has been devised to:

- Inform key community representatives, local residents and those with a particular interest in the site of the applicants proposals; and
- Give key stakeholders the opportunity to express their views on the proposals so these views could be considered through the design process.

The programme and format for the community engagement strategy was a public exhibition of boards presenting the scheme attended by Coventry City Council representatives. The consultation boards are shown opposite.

For a more detailed analysis of the exhibition and public consultation please refer to the Statement of Community Engagement that forms part of the application.
Graphic brief conceptual analysis
2.0 Use

Introduction

2.1 Building Use

2.2 Waterpark

2.3 Fitness Facility

2.4 Spa Facility

2.5 User Groups

Introduction

The applicant’s team has undertaken careful analysis of the area and liaised closely with planning officers to ensure that the proposed use and scale of the development is in accordance with relevant aspects as set out in section 1.3.

The proposed development provides a new, modern, innovative destination leisure facility within the heart of Coventry City Centre and makes a valuable contribution to the wider objectives for the regeneration of the area and the masterplan vision.

The main entrance of the building is highly transparent, offering views both in and out to the neighbouring public realm. This will communicate the buildings changing activities and create a dialogue between internal and external environments.

The Spa and 25m pool facilities are provided in an intimate environment at ground floor. Above this the fitness suite is located with glazed walls that offer views towards the Christchurch Spire and Bull Yard. At the uppermost level the leisure water is housed. Being at high level users are visually separated from the ground level public realm and are offered high level roof-top views across the city. Rides are accessed from multiple levels from a ride tower that is located to the eastern side of the building.

2.1 Building Use

The primary use of the facility is as a waterpark. The facility accommodates the following three principle building leisure uses:-

- Waterpark
- Fitness Facility
- Spa Facility

The challenge of the design has been configuring the scale and operational requirements of these three offers onto the constrained site whilst creating a landmark building which will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the surrounding urban realm.

Further supporting building uses are discussed in section 4.0.

2.2 Waterpark

The waterpark forms the largest proportion of the facility. At the outset of the design process it was established that the brief requirements of this, and the supporting wet changing area, would fill the available site area. Additionally the waterpark includes a series of high octane water rides (flumes) which are accommodated in a significant volume. The constraints of the site and the city centre context has determined that the flume rides would be housed within the building volume as opposed to the traditional external expression.

A key design decision has been to locate the waterpark ‘pool hall’ to the second floor level of the building, above two stores of accommodation which contains the spa, fitness and support accommodation. This key design principle will create an iconic, roof-top waterpark, design, that utilises the vertical, sectional, arrangement of space as much as it does the horizontal, plan organisation. This design decision has provided significant unique opportunities creating a multi-level sensory environment and a dramatic circular hall that permits a 360 degree visual relationship across the city.

The changing to the waterpark is to be located at first floor and is a shared communal facility with cubicles of various sizes to meet the demands of the public. The changing leads to the junior splash pad and toddler play area that forms a vibrant, wet active core to the building. The radial arrangement of the changing starts users on a journey that spirals up through the building to the leisure pool.

2.3 Fitness Facility

The fitness facility offers both wet and dry sporting activities to the user. At ground floor the segregated male and female changing areas permit access to both the 4 lane 25m pool, for either casual or lap swimming, and to the dry squash, studio room and gym facilities.

The gym, studio and spinning room are all located at first floor and are accessed from a dedicated stair core on the eastern edge of the building plan. The gym overlooks the double height entrance atrium and is offered views of the spire and public realm beyond to one side and windows through to the splash pad and leisure water to the other. This will also provide animation to the building from the main approach.

2.4 Spa Facility

The spa is located at ground floor and has a separate external access point from the main building, allowing the facility to be operated and maintained independently. The spa facility has been intentionally positioned towards the northern end of the building plan, removing it from the heavily trafficked front entrance, creating a more intimate environment.

The spa offers both dry treatment areas and wet relaxation areas including sauna, steam and plunge pool facilities. The spa also offers access to the 4 lane 25m pool.

2.5 User groups

Throughout the design development careful consideration has been given to the separate user groups and the routes that they will take. This has primarily affected the building entrance where several users converge. Strategies have been implemented that segregate leisure water, gym and spa user groups making routes identifiable and clearly legible.
3.0 Amount

Introduction
3.1 Existing Site
3.2 Scale of Proposals

Introduction
The Applicant's team has given careful consideration to the suitability of the site to accommodate the requirements of the brief and have liaised closely with Coventry City Council to ensure that the proposals are in accordance with the relevant Planning Policies as set out in Section 1.3.

3.1 Existing Site
The existing site is currently occupied by Spire House, an office building owned by Coventry City Council that accommodates the Council’s Housing Department. The demolition of Spire House is proposed as part of this application to enable the site for development of the water park. In addition to the demolition of Spire House it is proposed that three trees are to be removed, for further details please refer to the Arboricultural Statement included as part of this application.

The extent of the proposed demolitions works are identified in the plan opposite.

3.2 Scale of Proposals
The building occupies a ground floor footprint of 2730sqm and offers approximately 7300sqm of gross internal accommodation. Due to the constrained nature of the site the proposed building is required to operate over a number of levels to house the activities it needs to contain.

The proposed facility has three principle levels and comprise of the following core accommodation:

Ground Floor
• Foyer, Reception and Café Area
• Fitness
• Spa
• 25m pool
• Plant

First Floor
• Fitness
• Wet Changing and Wet Activity Area
• Plant

Second Floor
• Leisure Pool Hall
Illustrative section showing building relationships and waterpark activity
Introduction

The Applicant’s Team has given careful consideration to a broad range of external and internal influences on the form of the proposed new building so that the design is a natural and logical response to the site analysis and the functional brief. Of these, the following two aspects have had the most significant influences on the overall approach to site layout and building form:

- The relationship of the site to its local context, and its context within the masterplan vision
- The accommodation brief, and its evolution

The Applicant’s Team has liaised with all relevant regulatory and advisory bodies to develop a coherent and responsible approach to the layout of the development.

4.1 Site Influences & Place Making

An evaluation of the site has informed the key principles of the design response for the site, building layout and the appearance.

The diagram opposite highlights the key influences from the immediate area of the site. Most significantly the pedestrian flow around the site from the south/Bull Yard to Greyfriars Lane and the Civic Area via the pedestrian lane, Shrub Walk. Historic changes to the street pattern have resulted in a site that is centrally positioned between key routes making a new nodal point in the city.

A key aspiration is to enhance and improve the pedestrian movement around the site and Spire from the South/Bull Yard, to Greyfriars Lane, and Eastwards to the Civic Area. The proposals look to respond and redefine the links between these existing areas and the design concept will look to directly respond to existing pedestrian flows to emphasise a sense of movement.

The prominence of the site also suggested that the Facility should provide a nodal relationship to the wider City, form a visual relationship with the Cathedral and Holy Trinity Spires, and act as a skyline beacon.

The conceptual development of the site layout, its wider integration into the city urban realm, and interface with existing landscaping is reviewed further in the section 6.0.
4.2 Accommodation Requirements

Throughout the early stages of the project’s design a variety of options and strategies were considered for the layout of the building. Regard was given to the accommodating the desired brief whilst giving attention to the specific operational requirements of a waterpark facility. The design has also sought to be as compact and efficient as possible particularly in regard to the footprint and overall volume.

Circulation

The glazed elevation to the building allows a large active frontage overlooking Christchurch Spire and the external public realm. One of the key design principles was for the building to optimise visibility of people and promote a sense of movement and activity. To create this the internal organisation has been arranged so that primary leisure circulation is positioned to the external edge. The internal – external engagement culminates at the leisure pool level where 360 degree views across the city roofscape are offered from a perimeter pool walkway.

Entrance Foyer, Reception and Café

The main entrance is set to the side of Christchurch Spire, off the axial route from the west and Bull Yard. The entrance is positioned to engage with the new public realm and enhance pedestrian flow created around the building.

The building is entered via a lobby with automated sliding doors into a foyer. To the front edge of the foyer a double height space provides views up to the fitness suite and out to Christchurch Spire. The reception desk and turnstiles are clearly visible to the user on entry and fast track ticketing machines are available to help reduce queuing times. A curved open stair rises up through the double height space and is positioned to the external edge, again providing visual connection to the landscaped public realm. This stair begins the leisure journey experience and takes waterpark users up to the wet changing.

The café area can accommodate 50 diners and offers views into the 25m pool hall. There is the potential for the café to open out to an southwest facing external seating area along the building frontage. The fully glazed frontage will promote the casual use of the café by the public, as well as the leisure users.

Kitchen

The kitchen is sized to suit the café and associated seating area. A dumbwaiter lift is provided to link to the servery within the leisure pool hall. A cleaner’s store, along with male, female and accessible WC’s are also provided adjacent to the café area.

Crèche

To the side of the entrance, a crèche facility is provided with an open plan space facing into the reception area and out to New Union Street. A baby change room, 3no WC cubicles and a store room are also provided. The location of the crèche will allow it to be easily converted into a soft play area in the future if desired.

Meeting Room

A 30sqm meeting room is located adjacent to the crèche and can be directly accessed from the entrance foyer.

Administration

The administration area is located off the foyer and provides open plan office space, a Duty Managers Office, a CCTV room and associated storage space.
Spa

Whilst the spa is part of the overall facility, it benefits from a separate street entrance and is offered a glazed ‘shop frontage’ off the strengthened pedestrian path between Greyfriars Lane and Christchurch Spire. The area has a separate entrance to enhance an exclusive offer.

Reception

The entrance leads into an open reception area with a staff counter for bookings and towel collection. A merchandise display shelf is integrated into the side wall of the foyer and a reception office/store is connected to the space. Beyond the reception, an open, soft seating, waiting area and nail bar facility is provided. The reception area looks out onto the new landscape where banked planting gives a pleasant outlook and divides the spa facility from the principle pedestrian route.

Treatment Rooms

Behind reception three treatment rooms are provided, two single and one large two-bed room. Each treatment room has a shower, integrated shelving, storage cupboard and vanity unit.

Changing

To the left on entering, a short corridor provides access to male and female changing areas. These have open bench changing, lockers, a WC, two shower cubicles and a shower/change cubicle. An accessible shower/change room is also provided. A laundry room is provided for towel cleaning, storage and general cleaning supplies.

Spa Area

The main focus of the spa facility is a relaxation space set around a circular hydro spa pool. To one side of the pool is a sauna, steam and aroma steam room, and to the other side is a relaxation lounging area. Recessed alcoves off the central space house hot and cold ‘bucket’ showers, foot spas and solid tiled hot beds. The spa area connects with the 25m pool hall via a glazed screen and some additional relaxation space, situated within a curved area to the end of the pool is offered. An additional open shower is provided at the pool side spa entrance.
Fitness

The fitness area is accessed directly to the right off the reception foyer via a separate set of security turnstiles. It is configured over both ground and first floor, providing an active frontage to New Union Street, the public realm elevation and the double height entrance space. At ground floor level, a corridor leads to the fitness changing, squash courts and a stair and lift to access the first floor.

Fitness Changing

The fitness changing area is split into male and female and is also dual use, for both dry and wet users of the fitness facilities and the 25m pool. The area has been designed with floors incorporating the appropriate falls to drains with changing rooms leading to a unisex pool side pre-swim shower area. Each changing room incorporates 25m of changing benches for approximately 50 users, 60 lockers (based on 400mm wide half height), 4 additional post-swim / fitness shower cubicles, and 3 private changing cubicles. Three WCs (one ambulant accessible), along with hand basins and a modest vanity area, are provided off the entrance to each room.

Centrally, an accessible shower/change room and a changing places room are provided with both wet and dry access. The WCs within the accessible and changing places room are handed for left and right hand use. A cleaner’s room is located off the corridor for the fitness area.

25m Pool

A 4-lane 25m pool is provided centrally to the ground level for both fitness and spa users. The pool has a constant 1.2m depth with deck level access to all sides (no raised diving upstands are provided). Easy going steps are provided to one corner with recessed step access to the three other corners. A disabled hoist will also be provided. To the east end of the pool, a glazed wall is provided onto Greyfriars Lane to allow natural light into the space. This window will either be translucent or have integrated blinds for privacy screening. To the west end is a segregated pool side lounger area which is separated from the pool surround by a planted wall.

Squash Courts

Two glass backed squash courts are located along the fitness corridor. The courts are set down 2m from the corridor level, with steps providing access to the courts via a waiting / spectator area which broadens the corridor space. The arrangement allows for a disabled platform lift to be integrated to one end if required.

First Aid

Adjacent to the lift, a first aid room is provided for the fitness and general dry areas of the facility. The position allows easy access to and from the lift and directly to outside, via the stairwell, for emergency services if required.

Staff Area

To the southeast corner, a staff area is provided with an open changing / locker area and adjacent accessible shower/change/WC. The changing area opens into a staff room with kitchenette which could also function as a staff meeting area if required. Staff members are allowed views out to New Union Street through a large glazed façade on the buildings corner.
Studio
The studio sits on the building corner and will have a window onto the street, again highlighting the activity within. The ceiling height within the studio will be maximised to around 3.2m, and the room will be supported by a 10sqm store. Internally a mirrored wall is to be provided along one length of the space.

Spin Studio
The spin studio will be accessed from the fitness suite and will provide a dedicated space for 20 bikes with the layout focusing on the spin class teacher. A modest under-stair store is provided.

Fitness Suite
The fitness suite is located over the reception area, providing an active frontage to the approach from Bull Yard, whilst also providing the fitness users with a unique view of Christchurch Spire. To one side a full-height glazed screen will provide visual connection down to the entrance area and the other windows will allow views across into the centre of the waterpark. The main radial space will allow rows of equipment, shown notionally, to the window edges and clusters of equipment to the centre. Off the entrance, a weights zone with rubber mat flooring and mirrored wall is located. A modest consultation room is also provided adjacent to the entrance of the facility. At each end of the fitness suite stairs can be accessed to provide means of fire escape and an evacuation lift is provided in one of the stair cores.
Conceptual sketches showing the high octane leisure hall environment

Second Floor - Leisure pool hall
Examples of flume rides

Waterpark

The facility is designed to create a leisure experience whose internal activity is expressed externally in the building appearance. The conceptual approach, led by the area constraints of the site, formed a stacked building strategy where the leisure pool environment occupied the upper building levels. This created of roof-top leisure environment where panoramic views across the city can be appreciated and a clear ride volume can be offered above to become a new landmark on the Coventry skyline.

Wet Changing

The radial arrangement of the changing area reflects the internal spiraling journey and movement up through the waterpark. At the entrance, a shoe removal area and buggy park area is provided. Beyond this, a series of vanity areas book-end the cubicles and lockers that are rotated through the space. A mix of cubicles together with modest group change rooms for boys/girls school use or large family rooms are included. In addition to the larger cubicles and group rooms, a dedicated accessible change/shower room and changing places room are provided. To the end of the changing area, male, female and accessible WCs are located next to the Waterpark entrance for ease of access. Pre-swim open showering is adjacent to the entry to the waterpark, whilst post-swim showering is contained within the changing area. Once changed visitors access the water park through a light water curtain dividing the changing from the principle leisure space.

Central Wet Activity Area

Upon entering the waterpark, visitors will be confronted with a central core of water activity. In this space users can either engage with the features or proceed up through the building via a spiral ramp or a short, connecting flight of stairs. The upward journey along the spiral ramp will incorporate interactive water activities, whilst the stairs will allow users to connect directly with the high octane ride platforms.

The core houses a wet activity ‘splash pad’ area for juniors and toddlers. Off the spiral wall and from the top edge, it is proposed that a series of funnels, sprays and jets create more timed water interactions and cascading water over the wall will create a sense that the water is flowing over from the pools above. A series of platform balconies along the ramp could accommodate water cannons and geysers, whilst the space below these platforms could become ‘cave-like’ spaces. Features and slides are focused into the centre, and are integrated with the rise and curve of the ramp to allow easy access and encourage movement in the round. An area can also be secured to provide a toddler zone. This area will have interactive splash pad water features, a shallow open flume slide running alongside the ramp.

Overhanging the centre of the activity area is the bowl ride and it will culminate with riders dropping into a central plunge pool. The bowl will be translucent to let light through and to enable the silhouette of riders to be seen from the splash pad below. Further research is being undertaken into the possibility of the plunge landing pool also being clear or translucent.

The ride treads have been developed to provide separate access to the start of the body rides and tube rides. The tsunami ride is integrated between the two towers and is accessed from a lower level platform. Both stairs will have open views across the leisure hall.

Both stairs are the same and rise up to a ride start platform 13m above the water level. The tube ride stair would incorporate an additional platform at 8m to serve as the start for the side winder and the body ride stair will allow a lower level access point to the body rides and tube rides. The tsunami ride is integrated between the two towers and is accessed from a lower level platform. Both stairs will have open views across the leisure hall.

The detail of the rides is currently under development however proposals will look to incorporate colour and translucency to create a vibrant and active leisure hall environment.

Wave Pool

A splash pad beach gradually slopes down to a maximum depth of 1.35m to form the wave pool. The wave pool will have a series of water features within both shallow and deep water areas promoting activity when the wave machine is inactive. The wave chamber is located at the deep end of the wave pool above which is a platform on which a DJ booth could be housed. Both pools require ‘free board’ walls to prevent the moving water washing over pool surrounds. For the wave pool, where the wash will be more vigorous, the free board will be designed to a height of c.600mm, whilst the river will require a free board of c.300mm.

Spectator Area

At the top of the ramp, a spectator area separates the two water bodies of the river and the wave pool. The area provides a modest seating area that overlooks both pools, down into the activity area, and out to Christchurch Spire. Access to the spectator area is also provided from ground and first floors via a lift (which is lobbied for evacuation and environmental protection) and from first floor by a staircase. A dumbwaiter is provided from the foyer kitchen to allow a modest servery counter to provide refreshments at busy periods.

Rides

The proposal looks to integrate six flume rides, each of which offering a different experience to the rider. These include:

- the mini tsunami – a U shaped tube ride
- the bowl ride – a body ride culminating in a large bowl
- the vertical drop ride – a high speed body ride with a vertical drop and flat loop
- the family ride – a body ride with multiple loops
- the feature ride – a tube ride including shuttle and sphere features
- the navigator – an undulating tube ride

The ride towers have been developed to provide separate access to the start of the body rides and tube rides. The tsunami ride is integrated between the two towers and is accessed from a lower level platform. Both stairs will have open views across the leisure hall.

Both stairs are the same and rise up to a ride start platform 13m above the water level. The tube ride stair would incorporate an additional platform at 8m to serve as the start for the side winder and the body ride stair will allow a lower level access point to the bowl ride. The 13m ride platform will accommodate all the other ride starts. A barrier for the side winder and the body ride stair will allow a lower level access point to the bowl ride. The 13m ride platform will accommodate all the other ride starts. A barrier will be set between the body and tube stairs to segregate the waiting users from each stair, whilst also allowing for supervision of ride starts by a single attendant during quieter periods.

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The detail of the rides is currently under development however proposals will look to incorporate colour and translucency to create a vibrant and active leisure hall environment.
4.3 Evolution of the Layout

The design process began with studies into the existing urban form and the best way to approach the unique situation within which the new Waterpark and Leisure Centre will become an integral part. Analysis of the brief requirements led to two possible solutions for the site, pools on the ground or pools at roof-top. These solutions are demonstrated in diagrams 1 and 2 opposite and discussed below:

Solution 1 – Pools on the ground

This proposal looked at a response with the general accommodation (spa, fitness, changing and entrance) stacked alongside a full height leisure pool hall.

Advantages:
- Simple ground level access to the pools
- Strong street frontage
- Defined front and back of building organisation
- Clear vertical leisure hall volume
- Changing and leisure water at the same level

Disadvantages:
- Stacked accommodation restricts the footprint reducing the scope of the ride offer available
- Accommodation would be over 4-5 floors, hard to manage
- Pools will require digging into the site – costly groundworks
- Requires the whole site area, little scope to promote connections in the landscape design
- Privacy, public are able to look directly into the pool from the street level

Solution 2 – Pools on the roof-top

This proposal looked at a response with the general accommodation (spa, fitness, changing and entrance) placed at the lower two levels and the leisure pools placed above.

Advantages:
- Maximises footprint of leisure pool hall optimising the potential ride offer available
- Panoramic roof-top views over the city from within the pool hall
- Raised level increases privacy from the street
- Quantity of digging in below the existing basement level reduced
- The proposal could be potentially housed within a smaller footprint allowing greater landscaping opportunities
- Simpler circulation between general accommodation spaces

Disadvantages:
- Potentially harder to service pools
- Structural solution to be carefully considered
- Reduced street views into leisure pool hall
- Changing area at a lower level to the leisure pool hall

Based on this initial analysis and discussions with the applicant and the design team it was decided that Solution 2 would be developed. One of the key concerns was with the leisure pool at an upper floor was how it would be perceived from its surrounding context. The challenge was to convey the activity and dynamics of the facility to the outside through an architectural form. Through the conceptual design development several design options were explored and developed to arrive at the proposed solution.
Design Option 1 – Glazed Top and Plinth
The first phase of design looked to house the general accommodation within a solid plinth and express the leisure pool hall in a glass lantern above. The glass lantern allowed the ride offer to be clearly viewed from the outside and for the building to become an iconic illuminated beacon at night. Views looking out from the leisure hall would be maximised allowing the user to feel as if they were in a private outdoor realm within the centre of an urban environment.

Concerns arose when considering the cost viability and the maintenance of this solution and options where solid façade integrated with the glazed were chosen to be explored.

Design Option 2 – Ribbon
The design approach for the external building form was reconsidered to introduce a greater quantity of solid cladding into the upper level. One of the key concerns was that in reducing the glazing and visual connection to the internal activity that the building dynamics would be lost. A concept was developed of a wrapped ribbon which provided a sense of movement as an external built expression. Windows were introduced as slits where ribbon edges did not meet and both top and bottom elements of the design were unified.

Although successful in creating a dynamic the dialogue between internal activity and external environment was greatly diminished. This was most significant at the leisure pool hall level where the perimeter glazing was lost. There were also concerns raised over perceived scale as the single ribbon which linked both upper and lower levels did not visually break the building mass down. Additional cost concerns arose as there were many bespoke details arising in the creation of the form.

Design Option 3 – Peaked Cap and Clip
Following design team reviews and discussion with Coventry Council planning officers the design was rationalised into a set of three tangible elements and forms.

Element 1 – The Cap
A pitch was introduced to the roof which helped to reduce the height and costs whilst adding an additional dynamic to the building form. The roof was developed into a simple cap which is pitched top and bottom and leaned out to the front creating a simple dynamic form. The peak emphasises a significance and direction towards the front elevation and building entrance and the overhanging soffit, visible from the public realm below further emphasising this movement around the façade. With a subtle lean towards the spire the cap creates a dialogue, and reinforces the relationship between the old and new buildings. The cap is offset above the leisure pool level by a band of curtain wailing, reintroducing the panoramic roof-top views and the expression of the internal ride activity desired in option 1.

Element 2 – The Glazed Façade
The revised concept focuses glazing to the front of the building opposite Christchurch Spire and the public realm. The curved curtain wall elevation allows the public to view all the leisure activity ongoing within the building and a revised building layout that moves circulation to the outer façade which further expresses a sense of dynamism within.

Element 3 – The Clip
The lower levels to the back half of the building house the more functional spaces, such as plant, that have less demand on outward views. Three simple planes of textured masonry align the surrounding streets creating a lower element which has a dialogue in scale and materiality with the urban context. The solid planes help to secure the building into its site location and appear as a clip from which the glazed, curved front elevation is released and the cap hovers above. The planes are broken at the corners which further help to reduce scale but also provide opportunities to control requirements for glazing and plant louvres to the rear.
Contextual elevation facing north along New Union Street

Contextual elevation facing south along Greyfriars Lane
Introduction
The Applicant's Team has undertaken extensive analysis of the existing site context and liaised closely with the relevant bodies to develop an understanding of the aspirations for the site and an appropriate response to scale and massing for development on the Application site.

These investigations have considered the appropriateness of the proposed development against a broad range of criteria to ensure that the building makes a positive contribution to the local community.

5.1 Consideration of Scale and Context
In respect of the socio-economic aspects, it is anticipated that the development will have a positive impact on the local area - providing employment opportunities and support to local amenities. The footfall and draw from the new facility is hoped to deliver consequential improvement and regeneration to the site and its immediate and broader context. In respect of the environmental issues, it is anticipated that the proposed development will provide improvements due to the creation of new leisure amenity whilst assisting in promoting the wider regeneration of the area.

In respect of the visual appearance and townscape aspects, the proposed development provides an opportunity to set an appropriately high quality benchmark on this strategically important city centre site in Coventry, acting as a positive catalyst for urban regeneration.

Careful consideration has been given to how the scale of the building is integrated into the skyline, balancing the ambition for a beacon of the community with the sensitivity of the scale and massing of the adjacent buildings. In particular the building considers the Grade 2 Listed Christchurch Spire. The building position has been located to maximise the distance from the spire thus increasing the area of landscaped public realm surrounding it. The design has been informed by the nature of the site and its aspirational future masterplan that it seeks to trigger.

5.2 Scale and Setting
The site is viewed 'in the round' and principle street views, illustrated opposite, have been studied to identify the potential impact of the proposed building on its setting.

The surrounding context contains a mixture of uses that have been developed independently of each other. As such there is a wide variety of building typologies and scales neighbouring the site.

The building is set out from a ground level at +84.0m AOD, with the leisure pool level set at +94.6m AOD. The roof form pitches from a height of 27.5m (above ground floor level), at the eastern ride tower side, to 25.6m, at the western entrance side.
Landscaping and public realm conceptual precedent considerations
Introduction

The Applicant’s Team consider that the landscape setting for the building is a critical component in ensuring that the development is successfully integrated into both the existing and future context - providing amenity space for the benefit of the users and the general public, connecting the site to the adjoining development areas, and creating a distinct sense of place that complements this major new community building.

The illustrations contained within this Chapter of the Design and Access Statement are intended to provide a brief overview of the overall landscape strategy.

6.1 Existing Site

The existing site is currently occupied by Spire House offices which are proposed to be demolished as part of this application. The site is to be left hoarded post-demolition to ensure the public are adequately protected from any site risks. The surrounding context outside the site is predominantly ‘hard’ with a few grassed areas as would be expected in a town centre location.

6.2 Overall Landscape Strategy

The proposed landscape in this document is informed by and engages with the intent that has started to be developed in the City Centre South masterplan. The principles of the landscape design approach involve:

- engaging with Christchurch spire
- creating active edges
- rationalising movement
- promoting future links
- defining a new civic space

The building position and curved façade have created a significant area of new public realm between the waterpark entrance and the Christchurch Spire. This space could potentially become a new civic focal point within the city centre and a node through which new pedestrian routes are formed.

The landscape strategy extends the language of green bedding and trees through from Warwick Street and Bull Yard creating a consistent dialogue between the existing and proposed schemes. Formally the landscape reflects the curved nature of the façade and the overhanging roof form above and provides level access into the building. It is proposed that sandstone paving sets are used to the public realm surrounding the Christchurch Spire, the building entrance and public route to the north beside the Methodist church. Areas to the south, along New Union Street, and east, to Greyfriars Lane will implement concrete paving to tie into the existing public realm.

To the north of the building a secure, external bin and service compound is to be located. This is to be accessed by service vehicles that can pull off Greyfriars lane onto a shared surface and can turn through 180 degrees to return. Details of the external compound are to be developed further along with the detailed landscape proposals.
Illustrative day time visual showing the building entrance

Illustrative night time visual showing the building entrance

Aluminium shingle cladding

Glazed curtain walling

Textured brick facade
7.0 Appearance

Introduction

The key objective is to provide stimulating internal active spaces with a clear visual clarity and expression externally.

The legibility of the building form has been conceived so that the internal relationships inform the external characteristics of the building, creating a high quality, holistic solution.

7.1 Creating a Visitor Destination

At the heart of this design is the creation of a unique visitor experience within a unique setting. The design solution is truly transformative, helping not only transform the character of the site but also the perception of what a waterpark can be.

The building aspires to be a landmark for Coventry promoting new footfall and encouraging further regeneration to this area of the City Centre.

7.2 Design Concept

The vision for the external appearance of the facility is to create a simple, high quality, iconic design.

The established design principles respond to the city at two levels - the lower two-storeys responding to the street context and the upper drum forming a wider 360 degree nodal relationship with the city.

The legibility of the building form has been conceived so that the internal relationships inform the external characteristics of the building, creating a high quality, holistic solution.

7.3 Materials

As a new iconic development the building adopts a bold appearance on its surroundings and will be immediately recognisable not only because of its form but also the materials it utilises. The design divides the building into three core components, the cap, the curved glazed facade and the clip, each of which has its own distinct material identity.

The following descriptions investigate how the materials manifest themselves in the building design concept:

The cap

The proposed cladding to the cap has been intentionally selected to be eye catching and distinctive and has been developed as a coloured aluminium shingle system.

The aluminium shingle is to be arranged in a vertical strip with lapped joints. The vertical joints will flow consistently around the circumference whilst the horizontal joints will be staggered creating a diagonal flow down and around the curve of the building. The soft metal sheets will each have subtle surface distortions (oil-canning) creating a rippling shimmer to the surface as the sun moves around the building.

A pearlescent blue/green finish is currently being explored which will give further depth and expression to the façade surface. From the external public realm as one moves around the building the colour tones will subtly change giving additional interest and dynamics to the building. This visual effect will be further enhanced by the subtle change in façade angle as it leans out to the front of the building.

The overhanging soffit to the cap will have a smooth finish, distinctly different from the façade material and will emphasise movement around the building from the street level below.

The final selection of materials will be submitted as part of a material condition via large scale mock-up site samples.

Curved glazed facade

The frontage of the building will be in a clear double glazed curtain wall system with silicon joints to the horizontal transoms and standard caps to the vertical mullions creating a vertical accentuation to the façade. The curved glazed elevation provides views both into and out of the building creating an active frontage onto the public realm.

The clip

The three planes of wall that ground the building into its context and relate to the urban environment are to be of masonry construction. Existing buildings surrounding the site are a mixture of concrete, brick, copper, glass and sandstone. Due to this variety the brick planes have been considered as a new individual statement on the streetscape. A variegated, grey, textured brick that juxtaposes the coloured shingle cladding above is proposed. Further investigation into the texture and panelisation of the facades is to be conducted to help further reduce the scale of the planes. The corners of the clip between each of the planes are broken by faceted openings housing either louvres or glazed windows.

7.4 Maintenance

The proposed design and material choices have been made to help reduce the demand on the building maintenance regime. The external landscape allows for direct, level access to the building perimeter for maintenance, repair and replacement of the building façade. It is intended that the external glazed curtain wall will be cleaned using a reach and wash system. Cladding materials are being considered that are robust and have a durability that is suitable to a town centre urban environment.
8.0 Access

Introduction

The Applicant’s Team has given careful consideration to both the inclusivity aspects of access (including access for people with special needs) and the physical modes of transport – to achieve the allied objectives of ensuring that there are no obstacles to people who want to use the development and encouraging sustainable forms of transport.

The Applicant’s Team has studied current and potential access in the area to consider measures that promote social inclusion for both the users of the building and the access to services or amenity areas for the wider community.

A Travel Plan and Transport assessment has been prepared by the design team to support the planning application. The following pages represent a brief overview of the access to and from the proposed development, but for further information refer to the separate documents outlined above.

8.1 Access to Public Transport

The site is extremely well served for public transport, providing a wide variety of options for moving to and from the site:

- **Buses:**
  - There are three bus stops directly adjacent to the main building entrance off New Union Street. These form part of the Warwick Street loop off the City Ringway providing significant footfall to the site.

- **Trains:**
  - Coventry train station is a 10 minute walk from the site and can be easily accessed on foot via Warwick Street and through the new City Centre South masterplan.

8.2 Movement To and Through the Site and Building

The Applicant’s Team has given careful consideration to how the requirements of Approved Document Part M and the Disability Discrimination Act are addressed in the proposed design. In addition to which, careful consideration has been given to how the design can provide an inclusive response to the wider social and cultural issues - to ensure that the site and the building provide a fully accessible asset for the local community.

General facilities

It is important that internal and external circulation allows users of ‘standard’ wheelchairs full access to the facilities provided.

Stairs and Ramps

All stairs and ramps are generally designed in accordance with Approved Document M. Some of the main issues and variances to this are identified below:

- **Refuge areas for the disabled are to be provided to each fire escape stairwell.**
- **The lifts will be to a minimum of 1100 x 1400mm car size for wheelchair users with appropriate mirrored internal faces, (although a larger dimension is currently proposed).**
- **Handrails will be generally 40mm diameter except those to cantilevered glass balustrades where 45-50mm diameter will be used to allow the glass panels to slot into the handrail.**

Internal Spiral Ramp

The spiral ramp is a key feature of the inclusivity of the water experience and will be used by swimmers as an integral part of the waterpark experience as opposed to a public building route.

The ramp has been designed in the spirit of the Approved Document Part M regulations.

- **To interface with the various water features and levels, and taking into account the nature of the activities that the ramps flights are generally equal with 750mm rise increments and 13m goings between landings, with a 1:17 gradient.**
- **Handrails are to be provided to both sides of ramp flights.**

Hazards on access routes

The building will be designed so that doors do not open across access routes. Generally all public doors will be fitted with appropriate vision panels accept those where privacy is required such as WC’s.

External doors from plant rooms will be infrequently used and are generally in non-public areas (the service yard).

Manifestation

Appropriate manifestation is to be provided to all glazed doors and screens where required.

Contrasting colours

The designers are aware of the legislation for contrasting colours to enable safe use of the facility by visually impaired users. The internal colour scheme for the building is being developed to meet this legislation.

Building Access

Access to and from the building is level with the surrounding public realm.

8.4 Guidance and Standards applied to the project

The development follows the guidance contained within Approved Document M and the principles of the Sport England Design Guidance notes where appropriate. BS 8300 has also been used as a reference for the development of the detailed proposals.

The advice of disabled users groups are also being sought in order to ensure that the development complies with the strategic aims of the City’s wider access strategies.

Lessons learned through the project team’s experience of providing similar sporting and arena facilities elsewhere have also been applied.

8.5 Secure by Design and Safe Parking Scheme

Meetings are to be held with the local Architectural Liaison Officer (ALO) to review the proposed design and highlight any necessary considerations during the detailed design development.