

Planning Statement

Earley East Building, Thames Valley Park, Earley, Reading RG6 1PT

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement supports a planning application for the installation of a modular, prefabricated access ramp to the side south facing elevation of the Earley East Building, Thames Valley Park, Earley, Reading, RG6 1PT at ground floor level to the rear of the kitchen. The proposed ramp will facilitate safe and inclusive access and egress from the premises in line with current accessibility and fire safety standards.

The ramp is to be located away from the public highway and will not be visible from principal public viewpoints.

2. Site Description

The application site comprises an office building located within a technology park in the area of Wokingham Borough Council. The site features an existing side elevation fire exit door with a drop of approx. 380mm down to ground level, and serves the ground floor kitchen/fire exit area. As noted, the escape door does not benefit from level or ramped access.

The surrounding area comprises other offices and research centres forming part of the business innovation district. The proposed development site is not located within a Conservation Area or subject to any listed building status.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal involves:

- The installation of a prefabricated modular access ramp, with an approximate footprint of 15m².
- The ramp is to be constructed of powder coated aluminium alloy with powder coated steel balustrading.
- It will include:
 - GRP Non-slip mesh surface finish
 - Handrails on both sides
 - Edge protection upstands
 - A compliant gradient (not steeper than 1:15)
 - Landing platform(s) as required by Building Regulations

The structure is fully demountable and will not require excavation or alteration to the existing building fabric beyond fixing the ramp in place. It will be situated on the side elevation of the building, not visible from the public highway and with no impact on vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

4. Planning Policy Context

The application has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan and national planning policy, in particular:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

- Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
The ramp supports accessible and inclusive environments for all.
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
The proposal respects the character of the site and surrounding area and is modest and discreet in design.

Wokingham Local Plan Core Strategy:

- Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development)
The development enhances building function and accessibility with minimal environmental impact.
- Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development)
The ramp is well-designed, respects amenity, and supports equality of access.
- Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees, and Landscaping)
There is minor loss of green space where the new ramp will be sited on an area of hardcore.

5. Design & Impact

The modular ramp has been designed to:

- Be proportional and appropriate to the building's form and function
- Sit discreetly on the side elevation, causing no harm to street-scene character or public views
- Avoid any overshadowing, loss of light, or privacy issues to neighbours
- Require no significant groundwork or excavation, preserving much of the existing green space with the new ramp sited on hardcore to facilitate natural drainage infiltration.

Given its scale, location, and reversible nature, the ramp represents a low-impact and non-intrusive improvement to building accessibility.

6. Access & Equality Considerations

The proposal greatly enhances the inclusive access and means of escape for building users, in compliance with:

- Approved Document M (Access to and Use of Buildings)
- Approved Document B (Fire Safety)
- The Equality Act 2010

It supports the provision of safe, dignified, and equal access for all individuals, including those with mobility impairments.