



## 121 Chertsey Road

CONTEMPORARY OFFICES BORDERING A TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL AREA

**Client:** Canada Life

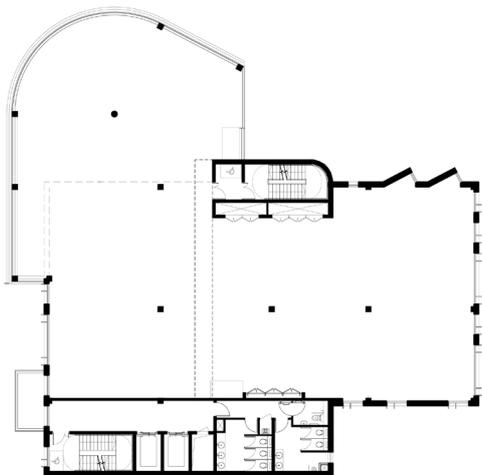
**Location:** Woking, Surrey, UK

**Value:** £5.6M

### Introduction

This 2500m<sup>2</sup> office development responds to its residential neighbourhood by presenting itself as two distinct buildings – a six-storey main office 'block' and a smaller three-storey curved 'drum'.

The building is situated near residential terraced housing, as well as office developments from the 1970s and '80s. The two very distinctive elements allow the building to relate to its varying surroundings, while still giving it a unique identity. The space can be occupied by multiple businesses or in single occupancy.



## Massing Concept

The principles guiding the massing have been mainly derived from the location of the proposed scheme within the town. The basic concept for the massing is a pure, clean, solid block with a variety of projecting light elements – a corner 'drum', an entrance box and stairs. A lower curved transparent element addresses the main identified key view, whereas the taller more solid element acts as a bookend to the town centre zone of Chertsey Road.

This composition of two interlocking but contrasting volumes – curved and straight, transparent and solid, intricate and minimal – creates a landmark building as well as generating a desirable intermediate scale between domestic and commercial properties. The proposal addresses the fact that the site is situated on the threshold of the corporate and residential zones of this part of Woking. With its modelling and exterior treatment, the building relates to these two different entities without losing its own integrity.

## Access

The main access onto the site is to be retained almost in its existing position, which is to the north-west boundary from Chertsey Road. Currently, the surface parking at the rear of the building is accessed via an arch at the north of the north-west boundary. In order to access the proposed onsite parking, access from the highway has to be shifted slightly to the north.

**Servicing:** Services such as Waste Removal, Electrical / Data services, Loading and Emergency services will be required. Vehicles no larger than a transit van will service the building. These will reverse back into the site and stop at the end of the access road. Waste will be brought from the bin store into the forecourt. This is where it will be picked up by the waste vehicles parked temporarily on Chertsey Road.

**Pedestrian/Cycle:** The new proposal will retain the combined vehicle/pedestrian route which is off Chertsey Road. The entrance to the building will be emphasised by a prominent glass box. A back door is provided to the rear of the site as an alternative entrance/exit, mainly for staff. Cycle parking will be provided within the building undercroft, utilising a cycle storage system. This is a stacker type system capable of securing too.

**Vehicles:** The only vehicle access to the car park at the rear of the building is via the proposed access road. Disabled parking will be located at the building undercroft close to the entrance to the reception.

## Floor Plans

We have formed large clear plates to create a good working environment and a commercially viable scheme. The floor plate size is largely determined by the geometric constraints of the site as well as by the desire to achieve 'good practice' in natural light and ventilation.

The floor plate is a large open plan area served from a primary core which contains vertical circulation and toilet facilities. The secondary stair is enclosed and only serves as a fire escape. The floor plate is of an irregular shape but is relatively efficient considering the site constraints. On the lower floors it is a combination of rectangular and curved elements. The block is generally 15 meters but widens to 26 meters on the corner.



On the top floors the floor plate is reduced to respect the properties to the east and at the rear. Window openings are provided on all sides to maximise natural light. On the east elevation however, the amount of glazing is reduced to respect the privacy of the neighbouring residential property. This follows the comments made by planning officers during the development of the scheme. Vertical louvers become denser on the side elevation facing the east boundary. The staircase is clad with translucent glass planks where as some windows facing east are 'turned away' from the residential property towards the rear. All these measures are employed to respect the adjacent residential setting while retaining the quality of the working environment within the new offices.

All windows are openable. Within the curtain walling of the 'drum', around 10% of glazed panels will be openable vents. This will be sufficient to ensure cross ventilation.

### Exterior Treatment and Materials

The 6-storey main block is clad with Fibre C panels of several textures and colours of a natural light palette. The cladding is brightened with louvres of an open colour. Apart from enhancing the façade and bringing together the two elements, the louvres also enable a resolution of the privacy issue where required.

The lower curved element (the 'drum') is expressed as strong fully glazed 3 storey blocks, fronted with slick vertical louvers spanning the top two floors. The earthy coloured louvers are evenly distributed on the elevation facing Chertsey Road. After turning onto the side elevation the louvers become denser to respect the privacy of the adjacent residential site.

Vertical coloured louvers used on both elements bring them together. However, on the curve, louvers also highlight the complexity of the volume (the colour of the drum changes depending on the point of view), while on the box, although irregularly placed, they emphasise the inherent purity of the shape. Other projecting elements are treated in a very minimalist fashion and thus accentuate the primacy of the main block as well as lighten the structure. A neutral palette for the box cladding is enriched with different textures.

### Landscape

The forecourt of the building, measuring approximately 4 by 13 meters, with a combination of hard and soft landscaping. The landscape scheme adopted the same concept as the main 'box' of the building – a pure, solid block with a variety of projecting light elements. Treated in a minimalist fashion, with only few rectilinear benches placed onto a clean surface of the green lawn, the elements echo the glass boxes of the main building.

Green and red hedges are proposed to soften the edges on the boundaries. They will be planted along the northern boundary and curve along the 'drum' element, further emphasising its organic curvature. Along the eastern boundary a green screen of trees in planters will be introduced. This will further separate our development from the residential property and increase the desired privacy.

Our scheme will enhance the area by providing interactive and useable landscape features which can be inhabited by the office workers, as well as enjoyed visually by the public.