
Design Statement

The application relates to proposed works at

University of Huddersfield
Joseph Priestley Building
Queensgate
Huddersfield

Background

This project forms part of the University of Huddersfield's ongoing development and improvement to their student facing facilities.

The imminent completion of the new Oastler Building will enable the University to relocate some of the departments which currently occupy parts of Joseph Priestley Building (former West Building) and provide space for the development for the School of Applied Sciences, reflecting the status and success of the School within the University.

To this extent the existing building will be completely remodelled and refurbished to provide state of the art teaching and office accommodation for the School. Laboratories will be retained in the former Science Building (now also called Joseph Priestley Building).

This application refers to the construction of a new link extension to the East side of Joseph Priestley Building (JPB) which will provide vertical circulation in form of stairs and lifts and also an appropriate new entrance facility to the School which will aid in defining the identity of the School. The link will also accommodate break out areas and a small café outlet on the ground floor.

The link building will also enable the potential future expansion of the School in form of a 3 storey building to accommodate new laboratories.

This application also covers façade improvement works to the North facing elevation which is highly visible when approaching the University campus from the Ring Road. The improvement works will uplift the existing somewhat dated elevation and create a new focal point, with a fresh modern design.



View from Ring Road onto Joseph Priestley Building

Existing Site and Buildings

The Main University Campus is located to the South of the Huddersfield Ring Road and comprises a variety of buildings of all ages.

Six buildings on campus are Listed: St Paul's Hall, Ramsden Building, Sir Patrick Stewart Building, Bath House and St Paul's Drill Hall are all Grade II Listed. Sir John Ramsden Court is Grade II* Listed.

Joseph Priestley Building is located within the main University Campus.

The name Joseph Priestley Building was created in summer 2016 and covers two existing buildings, the former West Building and the Science Building. The two buildings are linked on the second floor.

West Building was constructed in the 1960s as a four storey, L-shaped concrete frame construction with a flat roof. It links into Science building with the end of its Western wing providing a circulation route between the two buildings enabling easy transfer for staff and students between laboratories, offices and teaching spaces.

The elevations are defined by the concrete frame which is visible externally. Between the column grid sit bands of white powder coated aluminium windows with bands of ashlar cladding below cill height, giving the building a strong horizontal emphasis. To the Northern elevation is a double height section of white aluminium powder coated curtain walling reflecting the layout of the laboratory behind. The Northern elevation forms a bridge link allowing vehicular access into the campus from the Ring Road.

The Science Building was constructed in the 1930s and completed in 1939 and is located between the Listed Ramsden building and the Listed St Paul's Hall.

The building was originally called Chemistry Building and housed laboratories. Its main façade faces the Ring Road and whilst not Listed the building has a strong street scene presence.

The design of the facade is Art Deco style and has a strong symmetrical emphasis with the main entrance forming the central focal point of the main elevation facing the Ring Road.

The building is four storeys high with a raised ground floor which allows natural light into the rooms in the basement.



Science Building (now Joseph Priestley Building) seen from Ring Road

Proposed Location of the new Link Extension

The location for the new link extension is in the courtyard formed by Joseph Priestley Building, Harold Wilson Building, Design & Media Building, Bronte Lecture Theatre Building and Technology Building. The area is currently used for car parking with some grassed amenity space.

All surrounding buildings date back to the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century and are of modern design.

Most of the car parking will be retained in the current proposal. The potential future lab extension to the East of the link building would be constructed on the remaining car park area. This will be in line with the University's overall car parking strategy for the campus to move all parking off site.

The new link building will be mainly visible from the surrounding buildings and from the pedestrian route through the campus alongside Technology Building.

The overall massing of the new extension will sit comfortably within its surroundings. The overall height of the link is a little higher than the main roof of the former West Building. To total height of the new link, including the screening to the plant on the roof, will be similar to the plant room on top of the existing West Building roof.

The new link building will not visually impact on any of the historic buildings within the campus.



View from Technology building into courtyard – location of link extension

Proposed Building

The link building will serve the existing Joseph Priestley Building as a vertical circulation route comprising the main stair case and two lifts. The link building is designed to accommodate the potential later construction of the laboratory extension to the East side of the link and will provide internal circulation routes for the School between laboratories, teaching spaces and offices. It will also provide informal breakout areas on each floor for students to gather for informal study and relaxation.

The construction will be an insitu cast concrete frame with a flat roof and curtain walling. New plant for JPB will be located on the roof of the link. This will be screened from view by vertical fins.

The external appearance of the link extension will be simple and light with a vertical emphasis through the design of the curtain walling. Two sides of the building will be fully glazed, whilst the third, East facing elevation will comprise rainscreen cladding in the location of the future lab extension.

The link building will create a light and airy circulation space with breakout areas inviting students to gather for informal study and relaxation. A small café outlet will be provided on the ground floor.

The link building will be accessible from the North and East to ensure it can be readily accessed from other surrounding buildings.

Internally the upper floors are offset from the glazed elevations on either side to create two atria.

The link building will create a formal and appropriate entrance to the School of Applied Sciences to reflect and emphasize its status within the University.

The existing entrance within the North elevation of West Building will be removed including the external ramp structure. This will significantly improve the visual appearance of the building and improve external circulation routes.

External Works

External works will be limited to the immediate surrounding of the new link building and consist of works that area required for accessibility.

To the main front entrance, external levels will be re-graded to provide level access. This will involve the construction of a small retaining wall to the back of Harold Wilson Building.

To the rear of the link building a new access ramp and steps will be constructed within the courtyard formed by JPB, Harold Wilson, Design & Media and Bronte Lecture Theatre building. The ramp is designed to be multifunctional and will also provide social space and seating.



Existing entrance to West Building and View towards location of new Link Building

Access Statement

The main entrance to the new link will be fully accessible. External ground levels will be re-graded to enable level access without the need for steps and ramps. To the rear entrance a new external access ramp and steps will be constructed.

Internally two lifts will be provided. The main lift will serve all floors including the lower link ground floor and provide full access to all parts of the existing building. The second lift will be accessible from the upper ground floor level only, via the external ramp. The upper ground floor level matches the level of the existing building.

Accessible toilet accommodation will be provided as part of the remodelling of the existing toilet accommodation within Joseph Priestley building. Provision will be made on every floor with exception of the top floor which does not form part of this project and does not comprise any existing toilet accommodation.

Façade Works

As part of the project, improvement works will be undertaken to the existing North facing elevation of the Joseph Priestley building. This elevation faces the Ring Road and is highly visible when approaching the University Campus from the town centre.

The existing façade with its exposed concrete grid and stone infills is now somewhat dated and lacks visual interest.

It is proposed that the façade will be over-clad with vertical anodised aluminium fins on a black backboard which will be fixed into the existing concrete frame. The parapet height will be increased to hide any plant located on the roof with the fins extending past the parapet.

The new cladding will give the building a much needed uplift and contemporary appearance which sits well within the overall campus and reflects the design of other recent new buildings such as the Oastler Building.

On the ground floor a picture frame window will be constructed which provides views into the Resource Centre and will showcase the work undertaken in the School of Applied Science.

The existing windows and curtain walling to this elevation will be retained. To bring them in line with the overall design of the new façade they will be painted in a dark grey, which will detract from the actual window frames and highlight the fins as the main design feature. Any exposed elements of the concrete frame will also be painted in dark grey.

The building name will be displayed above the picture frame window to aid way finding around the University Campus. A new 'University' sign will be displayed in prominent location on the elevation of the existing plant room.



View from Ring Road towards Joseph Priestley Building showing proposed façade treatment

The design for the new façade has been carefully considered to be sensitive to the adjacent Listed St Paul's Hall to the West of Joseph Priestley Building.

The simplicity and colouring of the proposal will be complementary to the stone built church building and not detract from the historic building.



Joseph Priestley Building in the context of the Listed St Paul's Hall