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# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**Conversion of the Wheatsheaf workshops and outbuildings into 16 No one and two bedroom apartments at**
**Wheatsheaf Workshops. High Streets, Rhosymedre, Wrexham, LL14 3YE.**




Client: Gurjit Mahal
Design team: HDS Architectural services LTD

## 1. Introduction

This statement is provided in support of a planning permission application for the conversion of the existing buildings at the Wheatsheaf Workshops into 16 No x one and two bedroom apartments.

To be read in conjunction with drawing No's and details;

- WW/PD/01-As Existing Ground Floor Plan
- WW/PD/02-As Existing First Floor Plan
- WW/PD/03-As Existing Elevations
- WW/PD/04-Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- WW/PD/05-Proposed First Floor Plan
- WW/PD/06-Proposed Elevations
- WW/PD/07 Site plan As Existing
- WW/PD/08 Site Plan Proposed
- WWW/PD/01-Outbuildings-As Existing Floor Plan and Elevations
- WWW/PD/02-Outbuildings-Proposed Floor Plan and Elevations

## 2. Proposed development

The Wheatsheaf workshops site comprises of a substantial detached former office building with outbuildings and parking on a site extending to 0.3 Acres (0.1 Hectares). The property has been vacant for a long time and is in need a thorough program of renovation and repair. The proposed scheme being put forward for consideration is to make use of the existing brown field site by converting the pair of buildings into 16 No x one and two bedroom apartments.

## 3. Site assessment

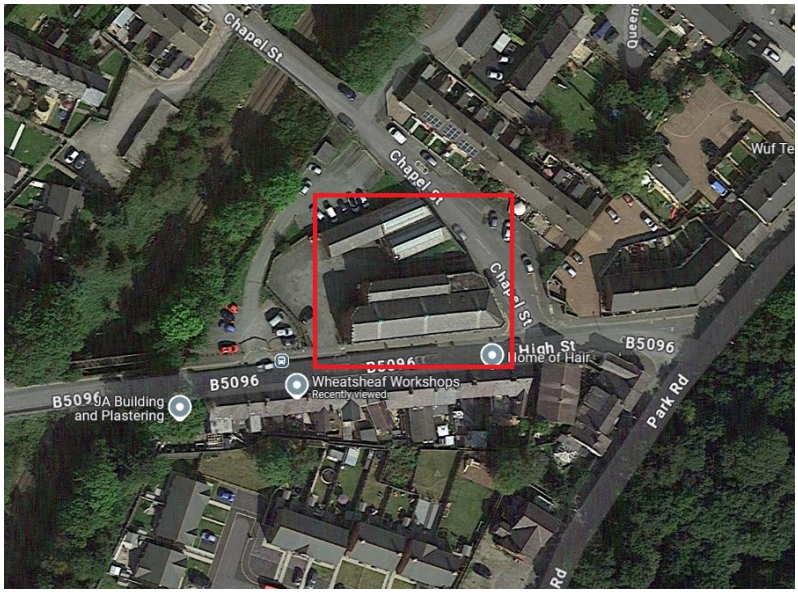



**Fig. 1 – Location of Existing Site**

Rhosymedre is a village within the community of The Cefn & Cefn Mawr District at the centre of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site in the county of Wrexham, Wales. It can be accessed along Park Road, the B5605 from the A483 Ruabon interchange roundabouts and High Street, Rhosymedre, the B5096 connects to Rhosymedre to Cefn Mawr Village Centre.

The Wheatsheafs workshops building was constructed as a bakery in 1915 by the Cefn & District Co-operative society. As well as the main building there were several small outbuildings such as cobblers and a larger furniture shop, all within the boundary of the property. Its most recent use was for a number of smaller independent businesses / traders including a launderette service, fancy dress shop and computer repair business. These businesses used the premises, which were let out by Wrexham County Brough Council.

The site is situated right in the centre of the village and prominently forms one half of the main high street. On the adjacent side of the Highstreet there is a number of shops including a Chip shop, newsagent and hairdressers.

The site can be accessed to from off of Chapel Street & the High Street. There are two gated entry points into the site that contains the buildings and a second pair of vehicular accesses into the car park that encloses the site to the North / West and backs onto the railway. The majority of the site is hard landscaped with asphalt with small sections of the carpark landscaped with grass cover.

There are lots of local amenities in the area with shops and a supermarket within walking distance. The site is also ideally located for commuters being within easy access of the A483, giving access to all major road networks. There is also Ruabon railway station 1.5miles away from the site and bus services into Wrexham and Oswestry.

Given to the lack of maintenance made to the building and site over the years, there is huge potential for an investment that would sympathetically preserve this prominent building. As the former offices and businesses were no longer viable in the area, the site could be reused to create some much-needed local first-time buyer housing.

## 4.Form, scale and appearance




**Fig. 2&3 – Main building current and historic façade**

Existing Main building

The main Wheatsheaf building is a large two storey building with tall internal ceiling heights and approximately 3.8m floor to floor measurements. It has been constructed from the materials of the day such as stone cladding, local red brick, and Welsh slate with sections of the building constructed from concrete frame. The roof is mostly pitched with small sections of flat concrete roof. The current elevation form has been updated at some point in its history after the 1950's, as the historical high street picture shows the whole of the Highstreet shop frontage was originally glazed individual shops. These have been infilled at some point with only high-level gazing and intermittent front doors to the individual units remaining.

The Chapel Street & Highstreet facing elevations are more decorative and ornate with various pillars, parapets, window surrounds and bands of stone cladding. The internal facing elevations are simpler, being mainly facing brick with arched windows and basic brick corbelling at the eaves.



**Fig. 4 – Main building courtyard facing elevations**

Existing Outbuildings

The Outbuildings form duplicates that of the main building. It is constructed from the same materials without any of the decorative stone features. The internal areas are large open spaces with vaulted ceilings and large glazed windows / skylights to illuminate the working areas.





**Fig. 5 & 6– Outbuilding courtyard and Chapel Road facing elevations**

Existing Site layout




**Fig. 7– Existing site plan**

The site is currently vacant and consist of a main large commercial building along with a smaller outbuilding and a courtyard between. It could be assumed that the building layout was chosen at the time of construction to suit the requirements of the shared high street shops and bakery.

The external areas are currently hardstanding that could be utilised for a number of uses.

Proposed Main building alterations

The brief issued from the applicant for the proposed design and building alterations was to create a development of spacious one and two bedroom apartments. This presented a number of challenges such as providing adequate windows for each dwelling, maximizing the re-use of existing opening and trying to limit overlooking between the buildings.

The buildings depth from the front elevation and the location of the load bearing walls on the ground floor meant that the floor layouts would favour an open plan arrangement. There are already several doors and windows on the rear elevation which could be easily altered to suit the individual layouts. Originally the front elevation was glazed between each of the pillars as can be seen on fig 3. The proposal would look to reinstate some of the glazing and accesses into these areas, creating accommodation that opens out onto the Highstreet, just like the terrace housing that is opposite. Where new walls are built between the pillars, they will be rendered to match the existing. All existing concrete staircases and fire escapes will be utilized.

Proposed Outbuilding alterations

As an existing building the structures footprint cannot be changed so minimum separation distances between the dwellings cannot be achieved. To maximise the levels of privacy between the dwellings, doors have been minimized on the front elevation that faces the main building. High level glazing has been used in place of the existing doorways and the entrances into apartments 1-3 have been placed on the adjacent elevations. On the rear elevation, two existing windows that have been bricked up would be reinstated.

Proposed Site layout



**Fig. 8– Proposed site plan**

The site layout and landscaping has been modified on the proposed plan to maximise the amount of parking available to the flats and to create some additional space for bin & bike storage. Extra soft landscaping areas have also been created to provide opportunities to promote biodiversity and improve the sites green infrastructure. The existing accesses off of the Highstreet will be retained to allow access into the car park for the flats and access into the court yard for refuge collection or emergency service access.

## 5 Access

Vehicular access will use the established entrance into the site. The existing Access point off High Street will remain. Turning areas and manoeuvring space has been designed to meet the minimum criteria as defined in Wrexham local planning guidance note No.16, with each apartment being allocated it's own car parking space. The shared courtyard will be gated with an entrance from the car park.

The proposals include a shared bike storage area adjacent to the car park which would allow for commuters who may travel locally to work or to the train station in Ruabon. The bin store is located next to the car park, so that all waste storage and recycling would be stored off road ready for collection.

The Outbuilding and Ground floor of the Main building could be made to be fully part M compliment with suitable access doors and level thresholds created as part of the conversion works. As an existing building it would not be practical to make the First floor fully accessible.

## 6. Conclusion

The proposed scheme of works at the vacant Wheatsheaf workshops site would provide much needed housing and regenerate a long-neglected area in the centre of the village. The proposed works require minimal external alterations to the existing building and are in keeping with the local architectural style.