

## **Blueprint Architectural Services Ltd**

Office 3K4, Redwither Tower, Redwither Business Park, Wrexham. LL13 9XT

Tel: 01978 356500

[design@blueprintarchitectural.com](mailto:design@blueprintarchitectural.com)

[www.blueprintarchitectural.com](http://www.blueprintarchitectural.com)

## **Design and Access Statement**



### **Statement required for:**

Conversion of commercial unit to one number apartment with first floor addition to commercial property to create 2 residential units and storage facility.

## **1. Brief:**

- 1.1** We have been approached by our client to obtain planning permission for a residential development located within the settlement boundary of Johnstown.
- 1.2** The property currently consists of 3 commercial units, which have been underutilized for sometime. The Hairdressers occupying the southern unit is a thriving business and would remain in situ serving the local community.
- 1.3** Following the closure of Eco-operative a fireplace and stove specialist the units have failed to find a suitable occupant. As with many villages and towns/cities there are difficulties in occupying empty commercial properties.
- 1.4** Our brief was to extend the property to create a first floor. Due to the difficulties in renting commercial properties it was also determined existing commercial space could be more valuable and easier to occupy by converting to residential.
- 1.5** A storage facility has been requested to serve the retained commercial properties, storage for the existing hairdressers is minimal, the additional storage facilities will allow the business to buy in bulk reducing overheads.
- 1.6** Reducing the size of the lettable commercial space will assist in making the unit easier to rent.



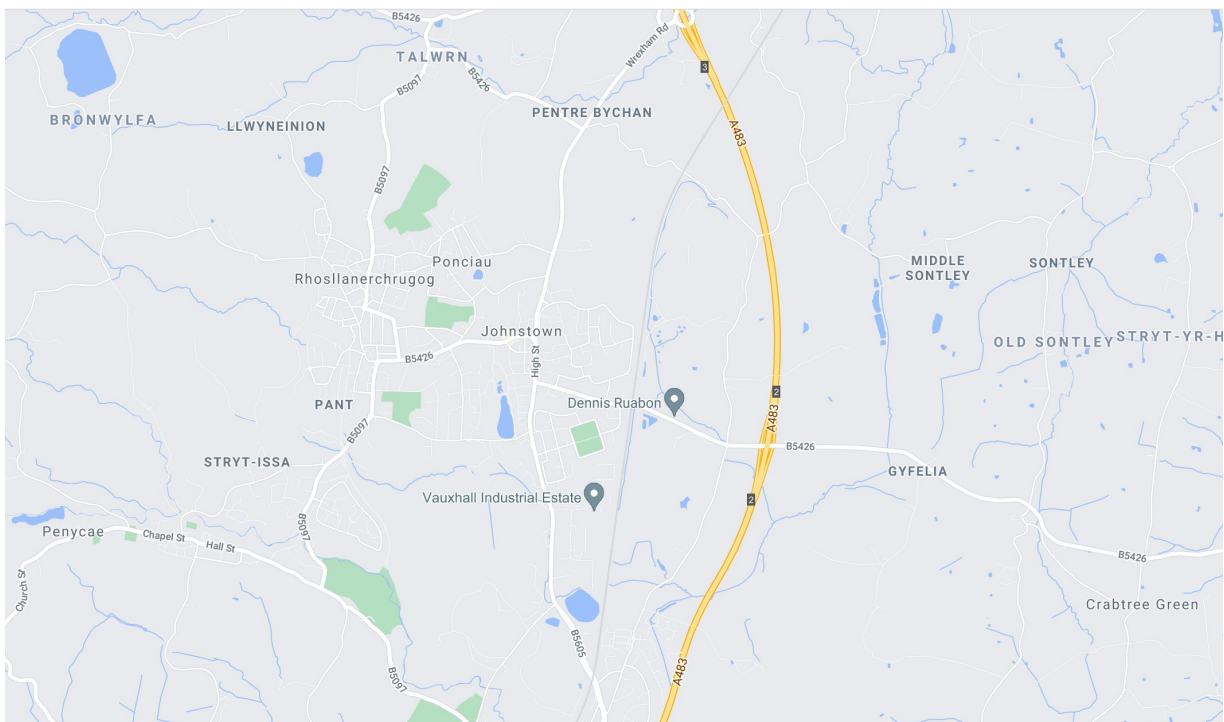
**1.**  
**Satellite image of the site.**

## **2. Access, including movement to and from the site:**

- 2.1** The site is accessed off Maes Isaf, located with Nant Park a residential housing estate. Johnstown is village located to the South West of Wrexham, the location is perfect for

commuters with great road links to trunk roads such as the A483. The main road running through Johnstown High Street/Ruabon Road provides excellent pedestrian and vehicular links to the villages of Ruabon/Rhostyllen/Rhosllanerchrugog & Ponciau.

- 2.2** Accessed at either Ruabon or Rhostyllen the A483 provides commuters with road links to the towns of Wrexham & Oswestry, and the City of Chester. All three destinations being within a 30 minute car journey of the application site.
- 2.3** The A483 provides links to other major roads which can be accessed near Chester. The A55 express way connects road users to the North Wales coast meaning The City of Bangor is within an hour's car journey. The M53 & M56 is accessed off the A55 meaning good road links to Manchester and Liverpool are also within a relatively short distance of the site.
- 2.4** The access point into the site is to remain as existing. The access provides good visibility allowing cars to manoeuvre safely. It is proposed that 3 spaces to the rear of the premises are utilized for the apartment allowing ample turning within the site boundaries. On street parking exists for the commercial properties with 90% of customers using the hairdressers being local to Johnstown, many of whom walk to their appointments.
- 2.5** Although not achieving the maximum parking standard as set out by the guidance note, the site is in a sustainable location in terms of distance to the village centre and public transport links, such as regular bus services, a train station is located approximately 1.7mile from the application site.



## 2. Map of Road Links

- 2.6** The train station is within the village centre of Ruabon, ensuring Johnstown and surrounding villages are popular with commuters. This public transport link also provides non car users with the opportunity to access the villages/towns/cities along the train route such as Chester, Wrexham, Chirk, Gobowen & Shrewsbury. The rail network is national with thousands of

destinations available from Ruabon. Direct trains to Cardiff & Birmingham pass through this station, further destinations are available with 1 or 2 changes at specific stops.

- 2.7** Buses are regularly travelling through the village of Johnstown, terminating in Oswestry, Barmouth, Llangollen, Cefn Mawr and Wrexham. This public transport link provides excellent services to non-car users who wish to access towns and nearby villages. The site will promote the limited use of private cars due to the public transport links available, and conveniences located a short distance from the application site.

### **3. Character:**

- 3.1** Johnstown is a village located approximately 5 miles from the Town of Wrexham and 11 miles from Oswestry, and is located within the County Borough of Wrexham.
- 3.2** The village is historically part of the old coal mining community of Rhosllanerchrugog. The village has been subject to a number of residential developments which have occurred over a number of decades. Nant Park being the largest residential development in the village adding 100s of homes to the village. This estate is now recognised as the heart of community.
- 3.3** The application site is located centrally to the Nant Park estate. The commercial units formally served the local community, as shopping habits have altered 2 of the three commercial properties have become vacant. Vacant properties can have a significant effect on the character of the vicinity.
- 3.4** The commercial units were constructed during the period of the residential estate, materials used match many of the dwellings in the vicinity. Due to the density of Nant Park the predominant roofing material in the village is concrete roofing tile, this is a modern material in the context of a historic mining village.
- 3.5** Recent larger construction projects have been on going in the village, the junior school has recently been extended and refurbished bringing the school up to 21<sup>st</sup> century standards. The capacity being increased as meant the infant site located within Nant Park has become vacant. Other construction projects such as new dwellings located off the High Street have also recently been completed. The variety created by the recent additions to the village creates interest on the street scene.
- 3.6** Properties in the Maes Isaf locality are 2 storey residential dwellings with the exception of the single storey commercial properties we are seeking approval for. The additional storey being proposed will add the character of the area and create interest to the street scene. Due to the topography the commercial units are sited within a lower plateau of land.

### **4. Appearance/Design Principles & Concepts**

- 4.1** Our proposal includes for a conversion of one commercial unit to create a ground floor apartment, this is due to footprint available and lack of interest in the property as a rentable commercial space. It would also allow any locals who are less able to continue to reside in the community.
- 4.2** During the course of the design the current appearance of the site was discussed, with concepts on how to improve the character and create an interesting street scene. As the principle to the work involved the addition of a first floor, the choice of materials and position of fenestration is key to the addition to the street scene we are aiming to create.

- 
- Site plan of the proposed development showing building footprints, parking spaces, and amenity areas. The plan includes a central building complex with a 'Turning Area' and two designated 'Amenity' spaces. One amenity space is 5m² and the other is 1-3 33m². The plan also shows surrounding streets and other buildings labeled with numbers 3, 5, 14, 22, 28, and 34.

**4.5** The principle of design has also been considered in relation to secure amenity spaces, the intention to add a timber fence rather than a security fence would be a welcome addition visually to the public footpath that hugs the boundary of the application site.

**4.6** The apartments are to be sympathetic to the surrounding properties, constructed using high quality materials, sourced from local builders merchants.

## **5. Community Safety**

- 5.1** According to information available to the general public there has been 15 crimes reported in the vicinity for the month of December 2023. This information has been obtained from the Police website ([www.Police.uk](http://www.Police.uk))
- 5.2** There is very little reason to suggest why the introduction of residential apartments would see an increase in these crime figures.
- 5.3** With the inclusion of this proposal to the area natural surveillance would be vastly improved from a current building which is vacant during the evening and through the course of the night. The inclusion of this proposal could assist in reducing crime figures for the vicinity.

## **6. Environmental Sustainability**

- 6.1** The buildings will be fully insulated to meet the requirements of the current building regulations, thus ensuring the dwellings will be thermally and acoustically efficient.
- 6.2** Double glazed units will be used throughout and energy-efficient heating system will be installed to heat the dwellings.
- 6.3** The dwellings will be fitted with lighting outlets which take lamps of luminous efficacy of at least 40 lumens/circuit watt to ensure that the dwelling has efficient light fittings. 100% of light fittings installed are to be energy efficient light fittings.
- 6.4** The proposed development is seen as an environmentally friendly maximizing the site in a central village location. All services will be in close proximity of the site this will also ensure the sustainability of the development.

## **7. Local And National Policies.**

- 7.1** The proposed residential development is compliant with policies PS1, PS2 & PS8 of the Wrexham UDP.
- 7.2** Our Scheme to develop this parcel of land will be compliant to Policy GDP1.

## **8. Conclusion.**

- 8.1** We feel this planning application should be looked favourably the proposal involves creating additional residential homes in a village location where many conveniences can be found.
- 8.2** Maximizing the use and potential of the site within a settlement boundary is seen as a sustainable approach, one that should be fully supported by the community and local authority.

- 8.3** Reducing the commercial space available to rent will assist in sourcing a tenant for the unit. Support must be given to any development that seeks to bring employment and business back to the area.

*Document Prepared by:  
Dafydd John Edwards (ACIOB)  
Senior Architectural Technician  
on behalf of Blueprint Architectural Services Ltd*