

Planning Statement

To convert the property from a former office building to a C1 Use Class Aparthotel facilitated by a small roof extension.

The Old Registry, 23 Chester Street, Wrexham.

On behalf of Happy Days Group.

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1. Introduction

1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Happy Days Group for the conversion of a former Registry Office to a C1 Use Class Aparthotel. The last known use of the property was as an office building.

1.2. This submission includes the following documents:

- Application Forms
- Planning Statement prepared by Pegasus Group
- Drawing Pack (Existing and Proposed) prepared by Studio 256 Design
- Heritage Statement prepared by Liath Heritage
- Design and Access Statement prepared by Studio 256 Design

Planning History –

1.3. The site has undergone a number of applications in recent years, as outlined below:

- P/2017/0382 – Conversion to 11 no. flats (Refused 11th December 2017)
- P/2017/0383 – Listed building consent for conversion to 11 no. flats (Refused 11th December 2017).
- P/2018/0175 – Listed building consent for conversion to 11 no. flats across three floors (Granted 12th April 2018)
- P/2018/0176 – Conversion to 11 no. Flats

Background

- 1.4. The property was built in the 18th Century as a house and was previously used as the District Register Office.
- 1.5. The property was last used as a solicitor's office and is located within the residential and commercial area of Chester Street, Wrexham.
- 1.6. The site is a terraced property along Chester Street with a roadside frontage, and small hardstanding back yard with parking to the rear.
- 1.7. The property is Grade II listed, with an original listing date of 16th June 1980.
- 1.8. The property is at very low risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, and from surface water and small watercourses.
- 1.9. The site is located just outside of Wrexham City Centre but is located within the Wrexham City Centre Masterplan Area as identified within the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan; as seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 – Site allocation map.

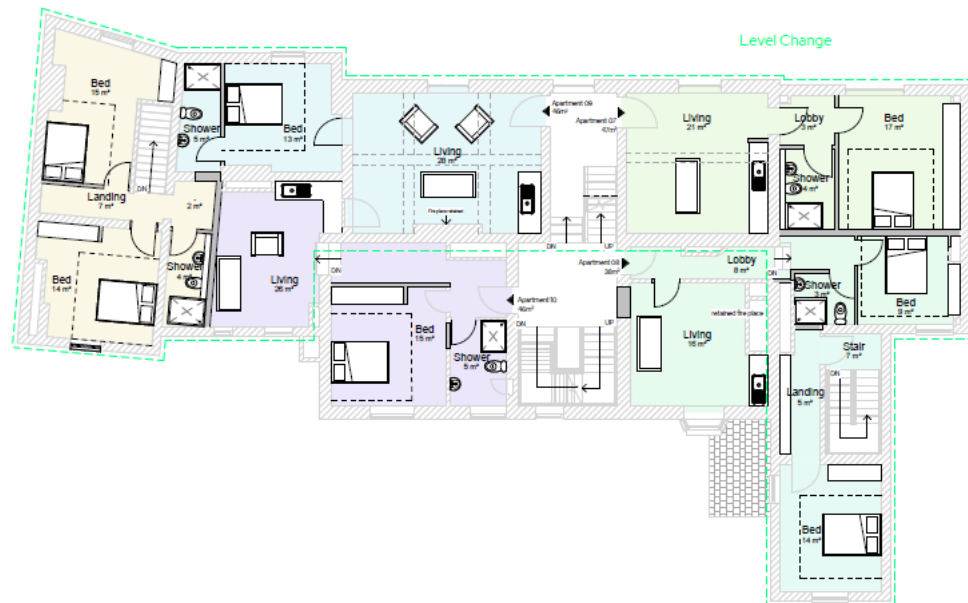


Figure 3 – Proposed first floor, floor plan.

- 2.4. The proposed development will include a further three, 1-bed apartments to the second floor, as can be seen in Figure 4.

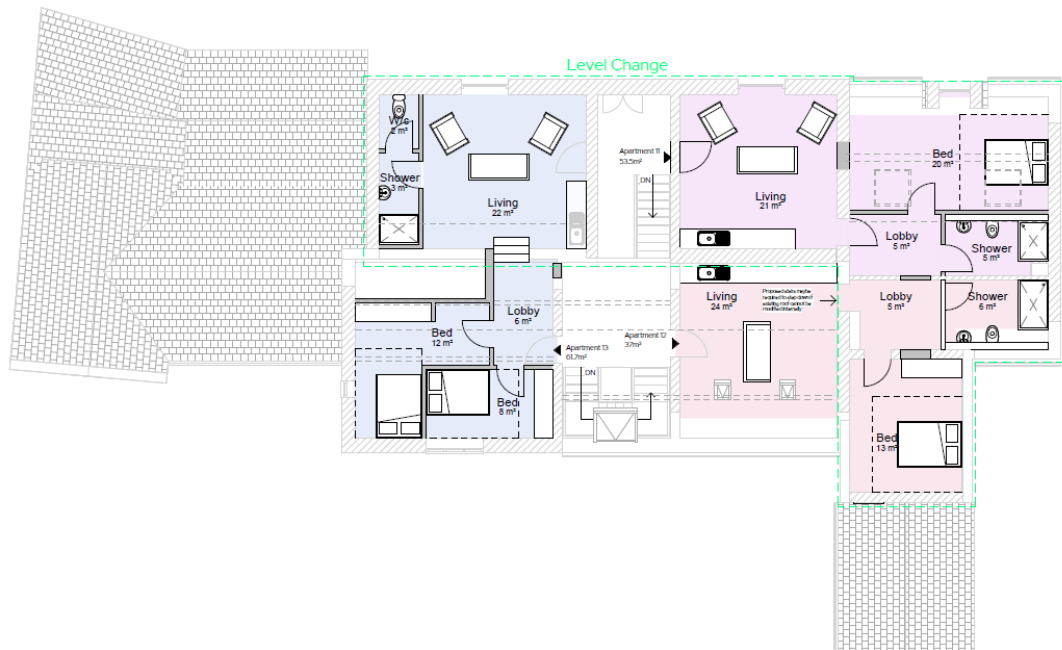


Figure 4 – Proposed second floor, floor plan.

- 2.5. The exterior will remain as existing as can be seen when comparing the existing and proposed elevations within Figures 5–8.



Figure 5 – Proposed (Top) and Existing (Bottom) front elevation.





Figure 6 – Proposed (Top) and Existing (Bottom) rear elevation.

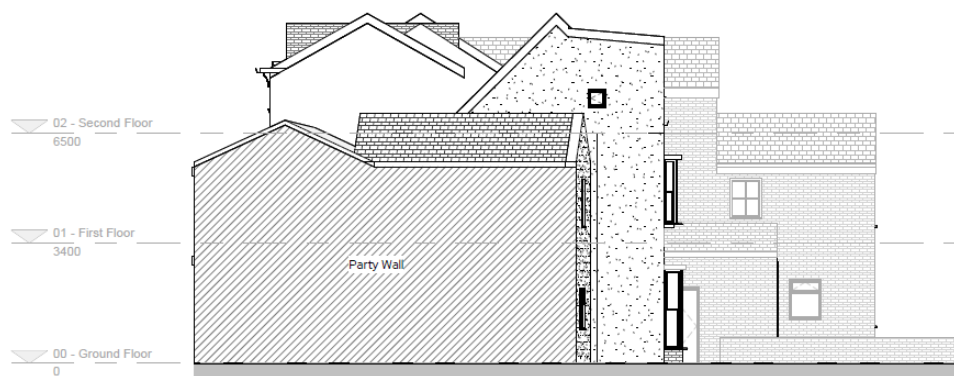
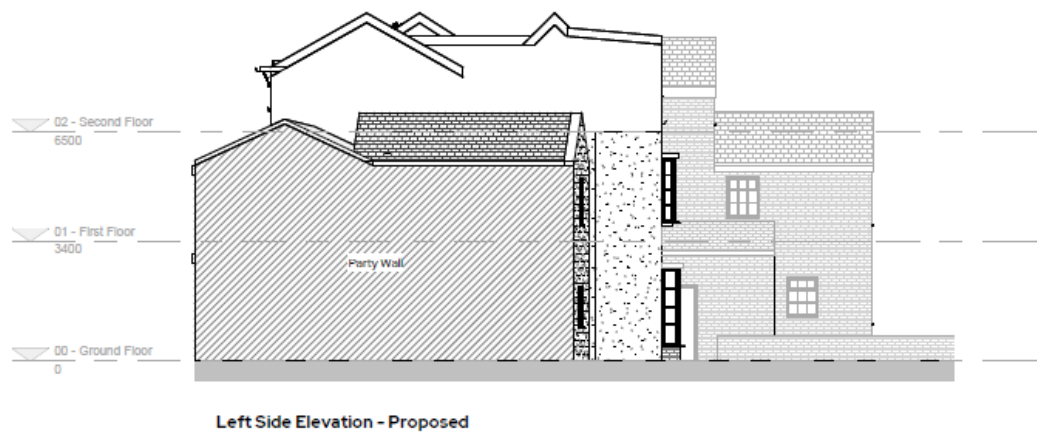


Figure 7 – Proposed (Top) and Existing (Bottom) left elevation.

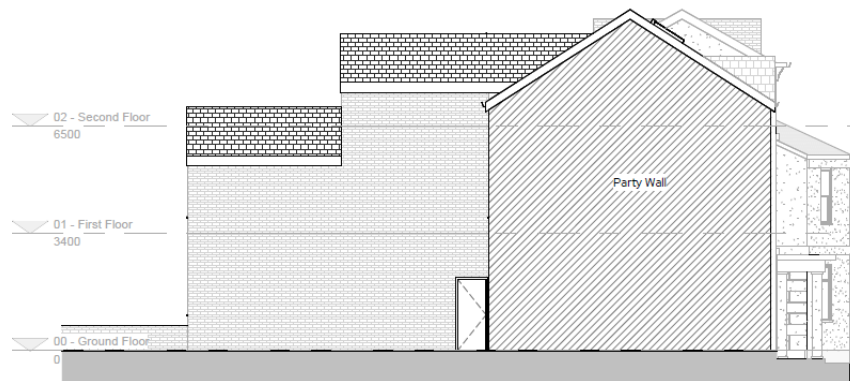
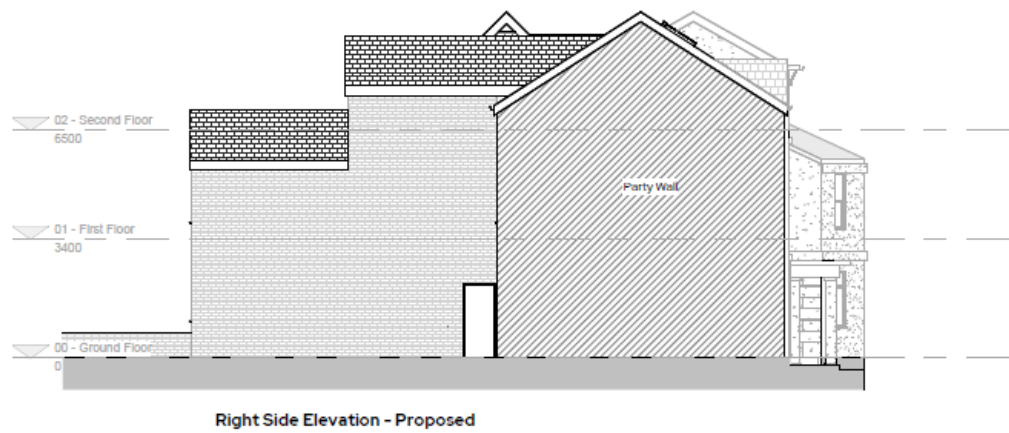


Figure 8 – Proposed (Top) and Existing (Bottom) right elevation.

3. Planning Policy Context

- 3.1. The relevant planning policy to be considered in relation to this proposed development consists of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11), and the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan.
- 3.2. The relevant policies and guidance are set out below.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) –

- 3.3. Planning Policy Wales sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes, Welsh Government Circulars, and policy clarification letters, which together with Planning Policy Wales provide the national planning policy framework for Wales.
- 3.4. Paragraph 2.3 – The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all.
- 3.5. Paragraph 2.12 – The planning system is a very important policy, decision making and delivery mechanism. It should seek to maximise delivery of outcomes against all aspects of well-being/ sustainable development, thus seeking to maximise contributions towards all the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This can be achieved by adopting a placemaking approach.
- 3.6. Paragraph 2.17 – In responding to the key principles for the planning system, the creation of sustainable places and in recognition of the need to contribute to the well-being of future generations in Wales through placemaking, development plans and development proposals must seek to deliver developments that address the national sustainable placemaking outcomes.
- 3.7. Paragraph 2.27 – Planning authorities should ensure that social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits are considered in the decision-making process and assessed in accordance with the five ways of working to ensure a balanced assessment is carried out to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. There may be occasions when one benefit of a development proposal or site allocation outweighs others, and in such cases robust evidence should be presented to support these decisions, whilst seeking to maximise contributions against all the well-being goals.
- 3.8. Paragraph 3.3 – Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area.
- 3.9. Paragraph 3.6 – Development proposals must address the issues of inclusivity and accessibility for all. This includes making provision to meet the needs of people with sensory, memory, learning and mobility impairments, older people, and people with young children.

- 3.10. Paragraph 3.13 – Existing infrastructure must be utilised and maximised, wherever possible.
- 3.11. Paragraph 3.55 – Previously developed land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainable principles and any constraints can be overcome.
- 3.12. Paragraph 3.56 – Planning authorities should work with landowners to ensure that suitably located previously developed sites are brought forward for development and to secure a coherent approach to their development.
- 3.13. Paragraph 4.1.37 – Planning authorities must direct development to locations most accessible by public transport. They should ensure that development sites which are well served by public transport are used for travel intensive uses, such as housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and services, reallocating their use if necessary.
- 3.14. Paragraph 4.1.50 – A design-led approach to the provision of car parking should be taken, which ensures an appropriate level of car parking is integrated in a way which does not dominate the development.
- 3.15. Paragraph 6.1.5 – The planning system must take into account the Welsh Government’s objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations.
- 3.16. Paragraph 6.1.7 – It is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve, and enhance the significance of historic assets. This will include consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way.
- 3.17. Paragraph 6.1.10 – There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage. For any development affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 3.18. Paragraph 6.1.11 – For listed buildings, the aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance their special qualities, retaining them in sustainable use. The continuation or reinstatement of the original use should generally be the first option, but not all original uses will now be viable or appropriate. The application of planning and listed building controls should recognise the need for flexibility where new uses have to be considered in order to secure a building’s survival or provide it with a sound economic future.

Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028

- 3.19. The Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan was adopted in December 2023, and sets out the planning requirements for achieving sustainable development in Wrexham County Borough over the period 2013 – 2028.
- 3.20. The relevant policies from the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan (2013–2028) are listed below:

- 3.21. Policy SP2 – New development is directed to the defined settlement limits and employment areas as identified on the Proposals Map.
- 3.22. Policy SP8 – To ensure the continued role of the County Borough as a key economic driver in North Wales and the wider region, the Plan will diversify the local economy and widen the economic base by:
- Ensuring an overall provision of 96.73ha of employment land within the County Borough;
 - Allocating a strategic expansion site of 28ha at Wrexham Industrial Estate – the County Borough’s Key Business Sector area, improving the quality of employment sites supply within Wrexham Industrial Estate and protecting a strategic ecological network for a number of local, national and internationally protected species and habitats;
 - Safeguarding 25 existing national, regional and locally important industrial sites essential to meeting the future economic growth of the County Borough, which ensures a range and choice of sites co-located with housing in both urban and rural settlements;
 - Providing a level of growth which allows opportunities to deliver approximately 4200 jobs in the County Borough over the Plan period across a wide range of employment sectors;
 - Maintaining and enhancing the County Borough’s tourism, culture and leisure offer taking into account the unique character, local distinctiveness and heritage of the area and its context in the wider sub region.
- 3.23. Policy SP12 – All development will be required to be of a high quality, sustainable design which makes a positive contribution to the creation of locally distinctive places by complying with the masterplanning framework SPG and KSS schematics. Proposals must demonstrate how they have taken account of the local characteristics of surrounding areas and how innovative design solutions will enhance the quality of the built and natural environment.
- 3.24. Policy SP14 – Development will only be permitted where it seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment including:
- Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar Sites;
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves;
 - Protected Species and their habitat;
 - The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Local Wildlife Sites;
 - Local Nature Reserves
 - Special Landscape Areas

- Natural landscape features and Green Infrastructure such as trees, hedges and woodland which contribute to the quality and diversity of the natural environment and plan an important role in mitigating the impact of climate change;
- The quality of natural services including water, soundscape, air and soils; and
- Habitats and species of principal importance to Wales.

3.25. Policy SP15 – Development will only be supported where it conserves, protects, preserves or enhances the following cultural and historic assets of the County Borough and their setting:

- i. Listed Buildings
- ii. Conservation Areas
- iii. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site
- iv. Registered Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes; and
- v. Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Remains.

3.26. Policy SP18 – To mitigate against the effects of climate change and adapt to its impacts, development proposals will need to demonstrate that they have taken into account the following:

- i. Reducing carbon emissions;
- ii. Protecting and increasing carbon sinks;
- iii. Adapting to the implications of climate change at both a strategic and detailed design level;
- iv. Promoting energy efficiency and increasing the supply of renewable energy; and
- v. Maintaining ecological resilience;
- vi. Avoiding areas susceptible to flood risk in the first instance in accordance with the sequential approach set out in national guidance. Highly vulnerable development, as defined in TAN15: Development and Flood Risk, should not be located within zone C2;
- vii. Preventing development that increases flood risk; and
- viii. Assesses the potential effects of climate change when preparing a Flood Consequence Assessment for the site.

3.27. Policy EM5 – Proposals for visitor accommodation outside settlement limits will only be permitted where:

- i. It involves the conversion of an existing building provided that:
 - a) The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive alterations, rebuilding or extension; and

- b) The building is worthy of retention due its appearance, historic, architectural or landscape values; and
 - c) The creation of a residential curtilage does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside.
- ii. It involves an extension to existing visitor accommodation provided that:
 - a) The existing accommodation is fully utilised and incapable of further adaptation; and
 - b) The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside.
- iii. New touring caravan, camping and glamping sites and extensions to existing sites provided that:
 - a) The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside; and
 - b) The site is used for touring purposes only and not for the storage of caravans which are not in use.
- iv. Exceptionally new development that forms an integral part of an established and viable tourism or recreation facility provided that:
 - a) The visitor accommodation development is clearly subsidiary in scale to the tourist/ rural recreation site; and
 - b) The development is of a high standard of design and does not represent a significant or harmful intrusion into the rural landscape.

3.28. Policy DMI – Development proposals, where relevant, must:

- i. Accord with or enhance the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing building(s) and surrounding landscape/ townscape in terms of their siting, layout, scale, height, design, density, use of materials and landscaping;
- ii. Not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties/ land; and provide a satisfactory standard of amenity for the occupiers/ users of the development itself;
- iii. Safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land, noise, light or air, or land instability, arising from development;
- iv. Take account of personal and community safety and security in their design and layout;
- v. Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport use ahead of travel by car;
- vi. Not give rise to highway safety, pedestrian safety or parking problems on site or in the locality;

- vii. Contribute to low carbon communities through energy efficiency, be designed to minimise the use of non-renewable energy, water and the production of waste both during construction and when in use;
- viii. Not increase the risk of flooding but make adequate provision for sustainably dealing with foul and surface water drainage and not result in an unacceptable impact upon the water environment;
- ix. On sites which have previously been developed, new development proposals should make use of existing sustainable building materials wherever possible for appropriate uses in order to re-use recyclable materials and reduce the amount of imported materials; and
- x. Ensure that any risks arising from past coal mining, as indicated on the constraints map, can be adequately managed.

3.29. Policy R2 – Development proposals within the defined Wrexham City Centre Masterplan area should:

- i. Support the regeneration, renewal and enhancement of Wrexham City Centre; and
- ii. Be compatible with the Wrexham City Centre Masterplan vision, objectives and aims.

3.30. Policy R4 – Outside the primary shopping streets of Wrexham City Centre support will be given to ground floor retail, professional services, food and drink, offices, hotel, educational establishments, leisure, commercial and other proposals that would enhance vitality and viability. Support would also be given to the conversion of upper floors to residential uses within the City Centre.

4. Planning Policy Assessment

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act confirms planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan for the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. In this instance, the adopted Development Plan is the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan (2013–2028). Technical Advice Notes (TAN) 12 (Design) and 24 (The Historic Environment) are also material considerations.
- 4.3. This section assesses the main considerations associated with the proposed development against national and local planning policy, and material considerations.
- 4.4. For completeness, the following points will be addressed within this section:
- Principle of Development
 - Sustainable Development
 - Heritage
 - Hotel Provision

Principle of Development –

- 4.5. The site is allocated within the Wrexham County Brough Local Development Plan as being outside of the Wrexham City Centre, but within the Wrexham City Centre Masterplan area, as identified within Figure 1. The site is also located outside of the identified Primary Shopping Street, where the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan (Policy R4) sets out the following:

“Outside the primary shopping streets of Wrexham City Centre support will be given to ground floor retail, professional services, food and drinks, offices, hotel, educational establishments, leisure, commercial and other proposals that would enhance vitality and viability.”

- 4.6. Therefore, the proposed development can be seen to be supported by Policy R4 of the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan as the proposed development proposes 13no. serviced apartments across the three floors of the property.

Sustainable Development –

- 4.7. Paragraph 1.2 of Planning Policy Wales sets out that *“the primary objective of Planning Policy Wales is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.”*
- 4.8. Planning Policy Wales also states within Paragraph 1.18 that *“legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated.”*

- 4.9. In line with sustainable development principles outlined in Planning Policy Wales, the proposed development will bring economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Economic –

- 4.10. The proposed change of use to a C1 Use Class Aparthotel will provide several economic benefits. During the works required to facilitate the change of use there will be a boost in the economy through jobs created on the site, as well as the purchasing of materials and services, supporting local businesses and indirectly supporting further jobs.
- 4.11. The change of use of the site will allow for new jobs to be created, which will continue to boost the economy into the future after the change of use has been carried out. The project will provide permanent employment with two full-time and four part-time roles.
- 4.12. The change of use will further boost the local economy through the serviced apartments bringing regular payments from visitors, as well as visitors using local amenities and facilities within Wrexham Town Centre.

Social –

- 4.13. A number of social benefits will be provided following the change of use of the building from a former Registry Office to 13 serviced apartments, which will support a strong and vibrant local area, in turn enhancing the vitality and viability of the local area.
- 4.14. In accordance with Policy EM5 of the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan, the proposed development will support and enhance the tourism and visitor economy within Wrexham.

Environmental –

- 4.15. The site is located within a sustainable location which benefits from nearby public transport routes for residents, employees, and visitors, as demonstrated within Table 1.

Table 1 – Services in close proximity to the site.

Service/ Amenity	Walk (mins)	Drive (mins)	Cycle (mins)
Wrexham Bus Station	7 mins (0.3 miles)	2 mins (0.5 miles)	2 mins (0.3 miles)
Wrexham Central Train Station	11 mins (0.5 miles)	4 mins (1 mile)	3 mins (0.5 miles)
Wrexham General Train Station	14 mins (0.6 miles)	4 mins (0.9 miles)	4 mins (0.8 miles)

- 4.16. There are no existing parking provisions at the site, and none are proposed as part of this application. However, as Table 1 identifies, the site is located within a sustainable location,

with good connectivity to existing public transport provision. Due to the site's location within Wrexham Town Centre, the site benefits from a number of nearby public car parks which could be used if individuals wish to travel to the site via car.

Heritage –

- 4.17. The site is a Grade II Listed Building and is surrounded by several Grade II Listed Buildings (Figure 9) where in accordance with Policy SP15 of the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan *"in considering works to listed buildings the emphasis must be on their sensitive repair and improvement using traditional materials and techniques. Any works to a listed building whether internally or externally or within its curtilage will only be supported where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant harm to its special historic or architectural significance and its setting."*

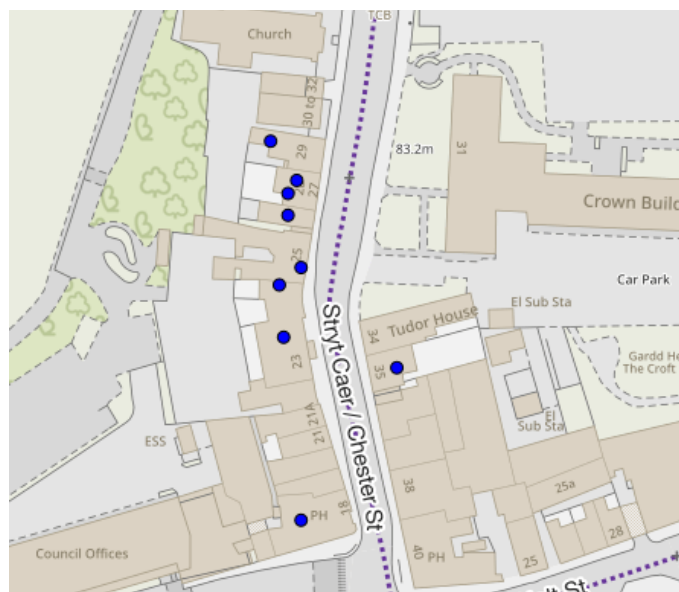


Figure 9 – Listed Buildings Map.

- 4.18. As shown in Figures 5–8, the proposed development does not seek to majorly alter the exterior of the building, with only some sensitive restoration and minor rooftop extension proposed. As a result, the development will preserve the Grade II Listed Building, and the character and setting of the surrounding Grade II Listed Buildings which are identified within Figure 9.
- 4.19. At present the building is vacant and runs the risk of deterioration, and remaining vacant into the future, which could in turn have a negative impact on the image of the area. Therefore, in line with Policy SP15 of the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan, the proposed development looks to enhance the historic environment through the reuse of a vacant building.

Hotel Provision –

- 4.20. The proposed development looks to convert the property to an apart hotel, with a total of thirteen apart-hotel accommodation units across the three floors.

- 4.21. The proposed development will enhance the existing tourism facilities within Wrexham Town Centre, in line with Policy EM5 of the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan, through the development of thirteen new serviced apartments, providing further accommodation facilities for visitors within the town centre.
- 4.22. The proposed development accords with Policy EM5 of the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan which sets out that proposals for visitor accommodation outside settlement limits will only be permitted where it involves the conversion of an existing building provided that the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive alterations, rebuilding or extensions; and the building is worthy of retention due to its appearance, historic architectural and landscape value.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group in support of the change of use of 23 Chester Street. This application looks to convert the former Registry Office to a C1 Use Class Aparthotel.
- 5.2. The site is located outside of Wrexham City Centre, but within the City Centre Masterplan area, and therefore the granting of planning permission for the change of use of the property to a C1 Use Class Aparthotel would contribute to enhancing the vitality and viability of the area.
- 5.3. It is considered that the change of use of the property represents a suitable form of development in accordance with the Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan, and it is therefore kindly requested that planning permission is granted without delay.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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