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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERTIAGE IMPACT ASESSMENT

**The Conversion of the upper floors of No.33 Highstreet, Wrexham, LL13 8HY
into No.3 x Self contained Airbnb flats.**



Client: Globe projects LTD

Design team: HDS Architectural Services LTD

1. Introduction

This statement is provided in support of a planning permission and listed building consent application for the conversion of the disused office space on the upper floors at number 33 Highstreet, Wrexham, into No.3 x Airbnb self-contained apartments.

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

- HS/PD/01-As Existing Ground & First Floor Plans
- HS/PD/02-As Existing Second, Third & Cellar Floor Plans
- HS/PD/03-As Existing Elevations
- HS/PD/04.1-Site Location Plan
- HS/PD/05.1-Proposed Ground & First Floor Plans
- HS/PD/06.1-Proposed Second, Third & Cellar Floor Plans
- HS/PD/07.1-Proposed Elevations

The Property is a grade ii listed building originally constructed as a bank in 1912 by Grayson and Ould, Architects, for the Bank of Liverpool. The building is part of a number of surrounding protected buildings that fall within the Wrexham Town Centre conservation area.

2. Proposed development

The proposed site is situated within a mixed-use area in Wrexham town centre and conservation zone. The building to be redeveloped is currently empty, its last use was as an estate agent with additional office space above. The change of use involves converting the upper three floors into airbnb apartments. Numerous shops, restaurants and public spaces are within close walking distance with amenities to suit the proposals already existing or being developed nearby. The proposed development positively utilises a vacant space within an already established area, making use of a derelict building within the newly granted city.

3. Site assessment

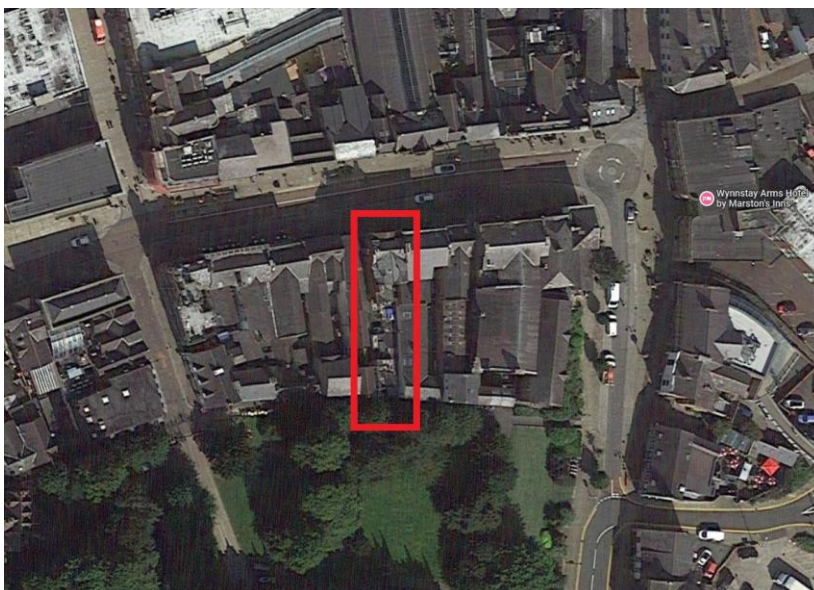


Fig. 1 – Location of Existing Site

The site lies in the centre of the City of Wrexham, on the South side of High Street. The front of the building faces onto the main street with the rear opening out onto Temple Row, facing the Church.



The building is a 3-storey property with two separately accessed cellars that contains the former banks vaults. Its most recent use has been as office and retail space for an Estate agency firm.

The city has good transport links into Shropshire, Cheshire and North Wales, with the nearest city being Chester which is approximately 13 miles to the North. The proposed development is located close to all main public transport routes to the city centre, including several bus stops and trainlines. The proposal is within walking distance of shops, parks and other community facilities. It is approximately a 7-minute walk away from Wrexham Train station.

Fig. 2 – Front Elevation

4.Amount of Development

A total of No.3 x 1 Bed apartments is proposed. The flats will be self-check-in apartments which will use the existing staircases and fire escapes. No new external buildings are proposed as part of the works other than new pipe runs to the rear of the building to accommodate the foul waster from the proposed development. Each apartment will comprise of an open plan kitchen, living and dining space, double bedroom and En-Suite.

It is generally accepted that town centre locations are appropriate locations for apartments due to the nature of the built development and the overall density of development, making the best use of land and resources. The site comprises a large three storey building which is easily capable of accommodating the proposed new use.

5.Form, scale and appearance

The buildings design and existing use layout lends itself nicely to the intended proposed new use. The buildings traditional construction and structure with thick load bearing internal walls, that correspond on each floor, helps to facilitate the change of use into separate flats. The greater mass and density of the partitions will make it easier to achieve the required sound reduction performance levels required within the building regulations. The proposed flats would utilize the existing front and rear access points into the building, so that all the flats had two possible protected routes out of the building in the event of an emergency.

The layout for each flat has been orientated so that all habitable rooms would have the benefit of an external window and natural light, utilizing all of the existing structural openings with no new openings requiring to be made.

The scale of the development remains consistent with the original building. Few changes are proposed to the exterior of the building, other than for example, a reconfiguration of the external pipework and the construction of a shared bin storage area in the rear courtyard accessed off Temple Row.

6.Access

As the building is existing and listed it will not always be possible to make the building fully accessible. It will not be possible to install a platform lift for the flats in this instance. All the staircases are existing, the banister and handrails are mentioned within the properties listing so will need to be retained in their original state. A new secondary balustrade may need to be installed on the stairs and landing area as the listed one will not meet the current building regulation requirement.

No parking is provided with the scheme as it is not possible to provide on-site parking. It is noted that the High Street comprises a bus lane, traffic lane and short stay parking. The site is situated in a town centre location close to main facilities and services, and close to good public transport links.

The upper floors of the building are currently planning class B1 Business, and would require a parking allowance of 8 car spaces based on No1 x space per 30m² of gross floor space under local planning guidance note 16. The proposed change of use for the upper part of the building to class C6 short term lets would require 1.5 spaces pr bedroom, resulting in a lower requirement of 5 spaces and therefore does not result in significant new parking requirements.

Wrexham County Borough Council does not have minimum parking standards and Local Planning Guidance Note 16 Parking Standards states that for changes of use of existing buildings / sites, proposals will be judged on their own merits. Given the highly sustainable and central location of the site, it is considered appropriate that no on-site parking is provided as outlined above. In addition to this, there are existing traffic regulation orders in place in this area which will mean that there will be little risk of on-street parking issues arising.

Each floor is plumbed with provision for foul waste into the mains sewerage system. Any waste or phosphates generated by the proposed flats would be equivalent to the amount that would be generated by the occupants of the office space if they were operating at full capacity under their current permitted planning usage. A covered storage area for bins and recycling will be provided within the courtyard to the rear of the property. No bins will be stored outside on Temples Row.

7.Hertiage impact assessment

Designated grade ii in 1980, No.33, formally listed as No.32 comprises of a four-floor office / professional services commercial building. It was designed by renowned Liverpool architects Grayson and Ould, whom have many notable works, with around 75% of their buildings have been awarded listed status in Wales & England.

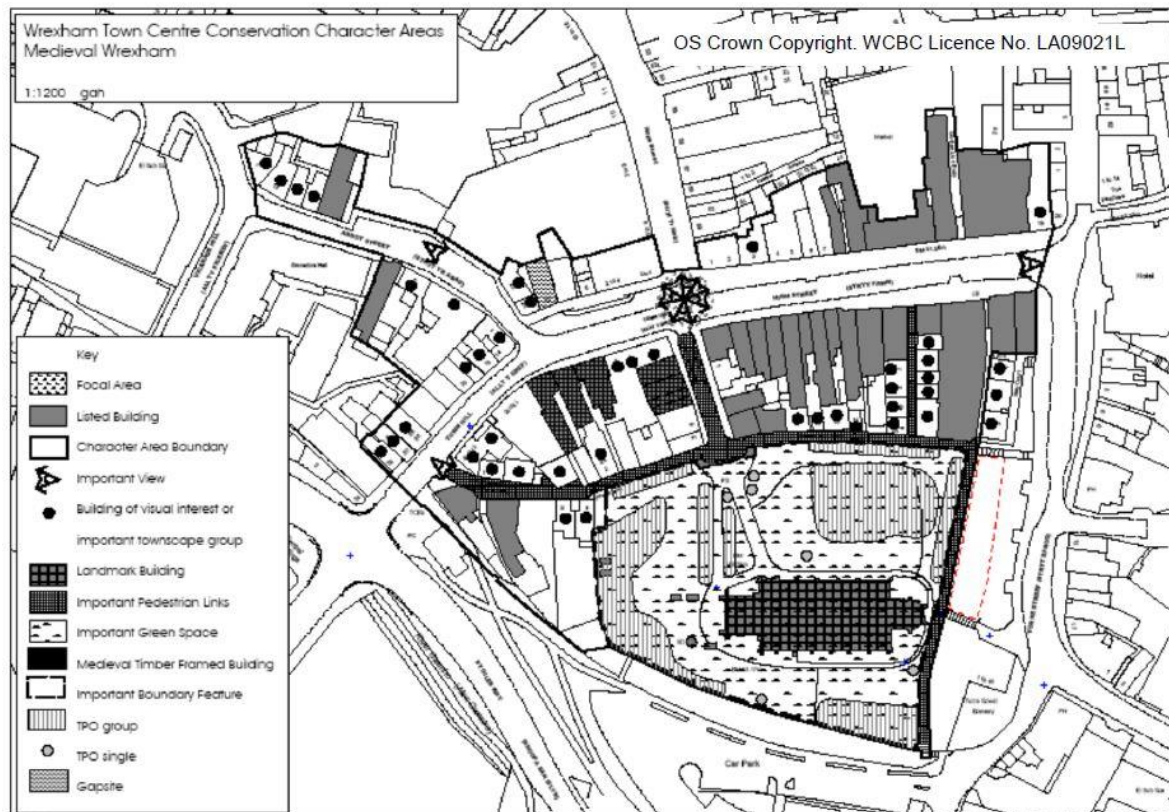


Fig. 3 – Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Character Assessment and Management Plan Extract

The building is a prominent part of a group an important commercial building on the high street and is part of the Wrexham Town Centre Conservation area. All of the adjacent buildings on the South side of the high street and some of the ones directly opposite and to the North East are all listed.

The reason given for listed designation was described by Cadw as “A good example of early C20 commercial architecture, forming part of an important group of commercial buildings.” The architectural style of the building is based on the ‘Palazzo style’, which refers to a style from the 19th & 20th centuries based upon the palaces of wealthy Italian families of the Italian Renaissance. The street facing elevation has white ashlar stone ground floor cladding with contrasting red sand stone above, brick to the side and rear elevations and slate roof.

Notable exterior architectural features included; the lower floor Ashlar stone elevation comprising No.2 x large round arched windows with stressed keystones and the entrance doorway to the right which has a pediment carried on console brackets.

The upper floor sandstone section of the elevation which comprises; Paired Corinthian engaged columns, supported pediment with modillion cornice and lunette, enriched with garlands. Upper windows are a mixture of 12,16 & 20 pane sash windows with decorative foliate swags and shell motives around the central window. The roof is finished with coped gables and end wall stacks.



Fig.4 – Lower front elevation



Fig.5 – Upper front elevation

Interior architectural features that are mentioned in the buildings listing include the staircase balustrades which feature turned balusters with finials and pendants to the newels, cornice plaster work on some of the ground floor ceilings and a C18 Adam style fire place in one of the upper rooms.

The building was originally constructed to act as a Bank on behalf of the bank of Liverpool. There are many features from that usage still remaining in the building such as two separate vaults in the cellar section, a dumb waiter lift that will have been used to ferry cash to the vault and steel safes in some of the upper floor offices. In its most recent occupation, it functioned as an office for an estate agency firm.

The interior of the sales areas has been modernized at different points within the building life. The last update included the addition of a suspended ceiling that has obscured the plastered cornices that are mentioned in the listing. The images below show the contrast between the original fit out and the most recent one prior to the building changing into the applicant's ownership.



Fig.6 – Original bank shop interior



Fig.7 – Estate agency interior

The applicant was unaware of the listed building status of the property as it was not disclosed by the vendor and did not come up in the solicitor's search. As such the applicant, unaware of their requirement to obtain listed building consent started works stripping out the building.



Upon the discovery of the listing, all further building works were suspended. It became evident that as part of the installation of the previous suspended ceiling, no care had been given to preserving the cornice and plasterwork and there was lots of damage done to ceiling finish throughout the ground floor.

The client intends to restore the ceiling to its original state using like for like materials with new sound proofing and fire protection added at the first floor level so that the listed ceiling and plaster work are preserved.

Fig.8 – current stripped out interior



The staircase balustrade will need to be retained. As it does not meet the current requirements for building regulations it will need to have a secondary handrail and 1100mm high guard rail installed along side the existing. Secondary glazing will also need to be installed to the windows to improve the thermal performance of the building's envelope

Fig.09 – Staircase balustrade to be retained

8.Conclusion

To conclude, the application seeks planning permission for the conversion of disused town centre office space into 3 Airbnb flats. The proposal provides a new use for listed buildings which will help to ensure that they are maintained and preserved for future generations. It is considered that the proposals are sympathetic to the setting, will be considered to have a minimal impact on the surroundings and are appropriate in planning terms.