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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERTIAGE IMPACT ASESSMENT-
REV-B

The Conversion of No.33 Highstreet, Wrexham, LL13 8HY into a Wine Bar



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 existing disused estate agents and office space at number 33 Highstreet, Wrexham.

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-Site Location Plan-Rev-B
- HS/PD/05-Proposed Ground & First Floor Plans-Rev-B
- HS/PD/06-Proposed Second, Third & Cellar Floor Plans-Rev-A
- HS/PD/07-Proposed Elevations-Rev-B

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 developing the ground floor into a wine bar. 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

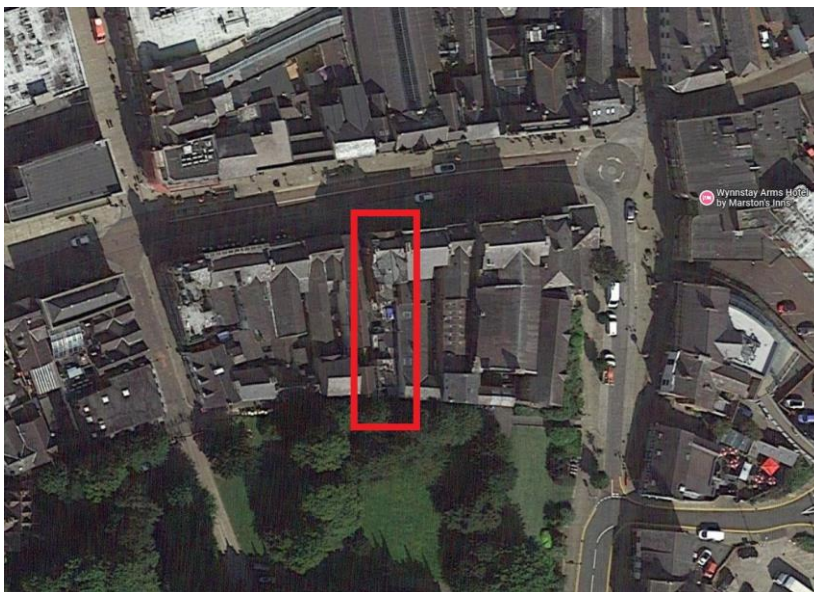


Fig. 1 – Location of Existing Site

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 new bar area is proposed. Internally on the ground floor, the old office space is to be opened up to create a spacious bar area with lots of seating and a main central service area. The layout will provide a space where patrons can enjoy a drink and conversation and will make the most of the high ceilings and period features that are unique to the property.

It is generally accepted that town centre locations are appropriate locations for drinking establishments 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.

The only new external structures created will be a wall in the rear courtyard area to screen off a bin store and to separate the area as a fire escape for the lower floors. This will also mean that a new doorway will need to be created on the wall that faces out on to Temples Row.

5.Form, scale and appearance

The buildings design and existing use layout lends itself nicely to the intended proposed new use. The ground floor retail zone provides a large open plan space with minimal internal organization required to maximize the area. There is a large cellar and vault that can be repurposed to provide suitable storage for alcohol, cash, plant rooms, etc. The bar and service area can be orientated so that the cellar is cut off from public access but is still easily accessed by staff. The existing toilets blocks can also be utilized, with only slight modification to one of the offices required to provide additional facilities for disabled customers.

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, new point of sale signage on the building's

front elevation 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. The bar area will be fully part m compliant with a portable wheel chair ramp provided at the entrance to assist a disabled visitor if required.

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. Local Planning guidance note 16 states that "Within the town centre shopping area it will normally be the case that developments involving the change of use (but not to residential) of existing buildings will be adequately served by existing public car parks or will be easily accessible on foot, bicycle and by public transport." Therefore, the change of use for the ground floor from Class A2 to A3 should be excluded from consideration.

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 bar 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.

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.

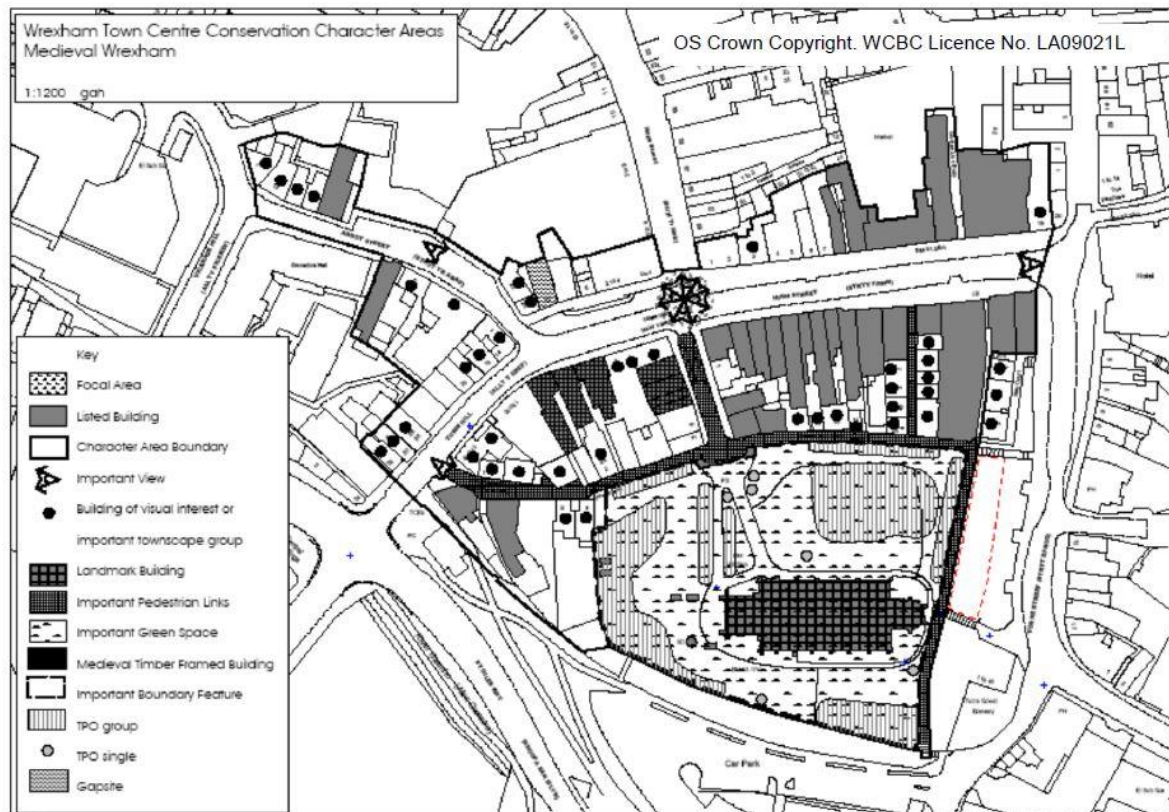


Fig. 3 – Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Character Assessment and Management Plan Extract

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.

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.



Fig.4 – Lower front elevation



Fig.5 – Upper front elevation

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 had 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 proposed scheme involves the creation of a new open plan bar on the ground floor. The client intends to restore the ceiling to its original state using like for like

materials. The entrance to the bar is also going to reinstate the original arch topped doorway that had been covered by the previous shop fit out.

Fig.8 – current stripped out interior



Fig.9 – Original bank entrance Fig.10 – Staircase balustrade to be retained

The staircase balustrade will not be affected by the proposals.

The proposed external changes to the front elevation are very minor. These include; replacement signage in place of the current Jones Peckover branding and new logos / manifestation added to the front glazing. The provisional fonts and colour scheme for the branding can be seen below.

Vault 33
wine bar



8.Conclusion

To conclude, the application seeks planning permission for the conversion of a disused town centre office into a bar. 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 have a minimal impact on the surroundings and are appropriate in planning terms.