

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE 12

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Conversion of Upper Floors to
Provide 2No. Apartments

18, REGENT STREET
WREXHAM
LL11 1SA
For
HARDING COMMERCIAL



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1.0 INTRODUCTION.

1.1

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for full planning permission for the conversion of the unused first and second floors of the subject building to 2No. residential apartments including means of pedestrian access. Minor changes are proposed to the layout of the ground floor accommodation in order to provide a dedicated rear external access to the proposed apartments and the retail unit is to be retained and refitted prior to being re-let following completion of the proposed works.

1.2

This statement meets the statutory requirements of Article 4D of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, as inserted by the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2009, and has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out at Appendix 1 of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: *Design*, issued in 2009.

1.3

This Design and Access Statement provides an analysis of the application site and sets out the principles that have already been established and that have guided and informed the design.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1

The application site comprises a traditional 3 storey building of significant character which provides around 85 square metres of Retail A1 floor space at ground floor level with a street level frontage on to Regent Street. Access via an internal staircase is provided to the first and second floors which show

clear evidence of previously having been used as storage, administration and staff welfare space in conjunction with the ground floor retail use.

2.2

The application is located within the Town Centre settlement boundary, in a Shopping Area with direct frontage on to a Principal Shopping Street and within the Town Conservation Area as defined by the Adopted Unitary Development Plan.

2.4

The application site has the benefit of service access to the rear in order to receive deliveries to the retail unit and for emergency egress together with the benefit of two car parking spaces and a vehicular and pedestrian right of way through the service area to the public highway at Egerton Street.

3.0 **THE PROPOSAL.**

3.1

The proposal is to make minor alterations to the ground floor retail space in order to provide a self-contained internal staircase to the first and second floor levels to serve the proposed apartments. 2No. apartments are to be created by the conversion of the existing first and second floor spaces which are no longer required to serve the ground floor retail space.

3.2

The existing retail space at ground floor level is to be refurbished and refitted as part of the development and is to be re-let on completion of the works.

3.3

As part of the works, the existing external fabric of the building is to undergo a scheme of renovation which is to include :-

1. The replacement of the defective slated roof coverings;

2. The localized repair of any defective existing masonry to the front elevation to Regent Street including repointing throughout;
3. The redecoration of the existing stone / concrete detailing to the perimeter of the existing windows and to the dentil detailing at eaves level;
4. Repair and where necessary replacement of windows facing Regent Street with timber windows which are to be identical to the existing units to comprise casement windows at first floor level and sash window units at second floor level.

4.0 **PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.**

4.1

The site has no recent planning history but is located inside the Town Centre settlement boundary as defined in the adopted UDP. Strategic Adopted Local Planning Policies PS1, PS2 and PS4 of the UDP are relevant to the proposals as are Policies S1, S3 and GDP1. Local Planning Guidance Note LPGN19 sets out an assessment of the Town's Character Areas and sets out a Strategy for Change.

4.2

Policy PS1 states that new development for housing etc will be directed to "*within defined settlement limits*".

4.3

Policy PS2 states that "*Development must not materially detrimentally affect... townscape character... or the quality of the natural environment*". The proposals include the external renovation and improvement of the existing building which will preserve and enhance townscape character. In addition the refurbishment of the ground floor retail space will lead to the re-letting of the space for the established use thereby making a significant contribution to the viability and vitality of the Town Centre.

4.4

Policy PS4 states that “*Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and... help to reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.*” The proposed development of residential apartments within the first and second floors of the application site will have the joint benefits of utilising underused spaces within this existing building, will provide much needed residential accommodation in a highly sustainable location within the Town Centre where car ownership will be rendered unnecessary and reliance upon travel on foot and by public transport will be encouraged.

4.5

Adopted Policy S1 states that “*Non-retail proposals on ground floor frontages in the principal shopping streets.... will not be permitted if they have a detrimental effect upon the character, vitality or viability of the area.*” The proposals involve the retention of the existing retail use at ground floor level in compliance with this particular Policy. Furthermore the proposed residential development at first and second floor levels will stimulate the re-letting of the ground floor retail space which together with the accompanying renovation of the external elements of the building together will have the cumulative effect of preserving and enhancing the character, viability and vitality of the area.

4.6

Policy S3 in the Adopted UDP states that “*In order to sustain and enhance it's vitality and viability, Wrexham Town Centre will be the preferred location for non-shopping uses...*” Such uses could include residential apartments such as those proposed where “*they are readily accessible to public transport facilities... are of a scale appropriate to the size and function of the Town Centre and would help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.*” As has been demonstrated above, the re-use of the redundant first and second floor spaces will bring individuals into the Town Centre in a highly sustainable location, increasing natural surveillance in the evening and night time hours, stimulating the re-use of the retail space at ground floor level and preserving and enhancing the external appearance of

this traditional building which plays an important role in the street scene. All of the above elements of the proposals taken together, contribute positively to enhancing the character, vitality and viability of the Town Centre as a whole.

4.7

The proposed development can further be shown to be in compliance with the aims and objectives of UDP Policy GDP1 which requires that “*All new development should:-*

a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.

b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.

c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.

d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.

e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.

f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.

g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.

h) Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest.

i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.

j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.

k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area

4.8

The proposed development will occupy an existing building and will include the external repair and refurbishment of the building without cosmetic alteration to the external frontage in order to accord with the character of the site and wider street scene and to contribute positively to the appearance of the locality in compliance with part a) of this policy.

4.9

The development will enhance personal and community safety by increasing the use of the rear service area for pedestrian access on a more regular basis thereby discouraging anti-social behaviour in this private area and can served safely on foot and by vehicles in the interests of pedestrian and highway safety and is located in the Town Centre near to the Bus Station. The site can therefore be shown to be highly sustainably located.

4.10

The change of use can be undertaken without any negative impact upon the amenity of adjacent neighbours and other nearby residents. Statutory services are all available adjacent to the site and can be provided without costs to the public purse.

4.11

The development of the site will not result in the loss of habitat or ecologically valuable land and the site is not within an area prone to flooding. The

development represents sustainable development in accordance with the aims and objectives of this particular planning policy.

4.12

Local Planning Guidance Note No. 19 indicates that the site is located within the Historic Core of Wrexham where the Strategy for Change includes :-

- Conservation
- Restoration
- Encouragement of Diversity

The proposals include the conservation and restoration of the principal elevation and roof of the building. The change of use of the first and second floors represents a diversification of the existing use which will bring the building back in to use. All aspects of the proposal can therefore be clearly shown to be in compliance with Adopted Local Planning Guidance.

4.13

Notwithstanding the scheme's compliance with the Local Planning Policies outlined above, the application site is within the catchment of the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC) where phosphate levels are a relevant consideration. Accordingly, NRW have indicated that they consider that proposed development has the potential to increase phosphate levels further even though Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have indicated that flows from the development can be satisfactorily accommodated at the relevant Waste Water Treatment Works. In doing this, NRW have indicated that it is down to the LPA to determine if the proposed development will have a significant impact upon the SAC.

4.14

To assist the LPA in reaching a decision on this matter, the calculation below compares existing foul flows from the property against that which would be expected following the completion of the development. The figures used in the comparison have been derived from the British Water Code of Practice, Flows

and Loads – 4, Sizing Criteria, Treatment Capacity for Sewage Treatment Systems.

Existing situation – Retail Unit at Ground Floor Level with 2No. floors of Office Space above. Fully operational, the building would be expected to support 8No. full time staff. In accordance with the Table of Loadings for Sewage Treatment Systems this would generate the following daily –

Flow – 8 persons x 90/litres/pp = **720** litres of effluent per day.

BOD – 8 persons x 38/grams/pp = **304** grams BOD daily.

Ammonia as N – 8 persons x 5mg/l = **40**mg/litre daily.

Proposed situation – Retail Unit at Ground Floor Level expected to employ 2No. full time staff with 2No. single person occupancy Apartments above. In this case, in accordance with the Table of Loadings for Sewage Treatment Systems, this would generate the following on a daily basis –

Flow - 2 persons x 90/litres/pp = 180 litres +

2 persons x 150/litres/pp = 300 + 180 = **480** litres of effluent per day.

BOD – 2 persons x 38/grams/pp = 76 grams BOD daily +

2 persons x 60/grams/pp = 120 + 76 = **196** grams BOD daily.

Ammonia as N – 2 persons x 5mg/l = 10mg/litre daily +

2 persons x 8mg/l = 16 + 10 = **26**mg/litres daily.

As can be seen from the brief, simple calculation above, the effluent flow, BOD and ammonia produced as a result of the proposed development will be considerably less than that discharging from the building if it were to be re-occupied for the established commercial use. This is clearly a betterment over the existing situation and therefore the impact upon the SAC will be **net positive**.

4.15

In terms of planning policy, it has been shown that the development of the application site by the change of use of the first and second floor levels is in compliance with adopted local planning and supplementary guidance.

5.0 **DESIGN**

5.1

Good design is an all embracing concept. The statement considers the essence of good design in response to the following factors :-

- Use
- Amount
- Layout
- Scale
- Landscaping
- Appearance

The above objectives are key to good design, to the understanding of and response to context and should form the basis of any scheme and design statement.

5.2 **Use and Amount.**

The proposed development which constitutes the change of use of redundant and unnecessary space at first and second floor levels, will utilize space which is not required to support the retail use at ground floor level. The change of use and the resultant rental income will have the benefit of reducing the rent required from the ground floor retail space to make the use of the whole

building viable, thereby stimulating the re-use of the retail space and creating employment, further enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

5.3 **Layout.**

The proposed site layout includes the building itself and the rear service area which will provide access for delivery vehicles to serve the retail unit and limited out of business hours car parking. It is anticipated however, that tenants will not require the use of a motor car but will rather take advantage of this highly sustainable Town Centre location and availability of public transport in order to avoid car ownership.

5.4 **Scale.**

The proposed development is to occupy the existing first and second floor levels and the external appearance of the existing building insofar as it affects the frontage to Regent Street will not be altered.

5.5 **Landscaping.**

Soft landscaping is not relevant to this application for planning permission.

5.6 **Appearance.**

As outlined above, the principal external elevation of the building which has a direct impact upon the street scene will not be altered other than by a program of repair and refurbishment. As such the outward appearance of the building will be enhanced and this will in turn contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Town Centre in this location.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

In summary, the proposed development identified as part of this application for planning permission has striven to achieve the following aims and objectives :-

- Provide much needed residential accommodation within redundant spaces above a ground floor retail unit
- Maintain the character and form of the existing built development in the area generally in order to successfully assimilate the proposed development in to the surroundings
- Provide a development which achieves the aims and objectives of adopted UDP policies for this type of residential development

In conclusion, this Design and Access Statement has demonstrated that the proposals are in accordance with adopted local planning policy and supplementary planning guidance for the conversion of non-residential space to residential use in the Town Centre.

In consideration of the above and the other information provided as part of the application, officers are respectfully requested to view these proposals favourably and resolve to grant planning permission.

D.S. Jones &Co. December 2022.

For and on behalf of Harding Commercial.

