

PLANNING STATEMENT

Re-roofing of Building
Without the Reinstatement of
Chimney Stacks at

18, YORKE STREET
WREXHAM
LL13 8LW

For

Mrs A. LEWIS



D S Jones & Co.

Architectural & Planning Consultants.

CONTENTS.

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0	DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS.....	3
3.0	PROPOSAL.....	4
4.0	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.....	6
5.0	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	10

1.0 INTRODUCTION.

1.1

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for planning permission for the removal of chimney stacks (in retrospect) following the re-roofing of the front and rear facing slated roof slopes at the subject property.

1.2

This statement meets the statutory requirements of Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(Wales) Order (“the DMPWO”) 2012, as amended by Article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016.

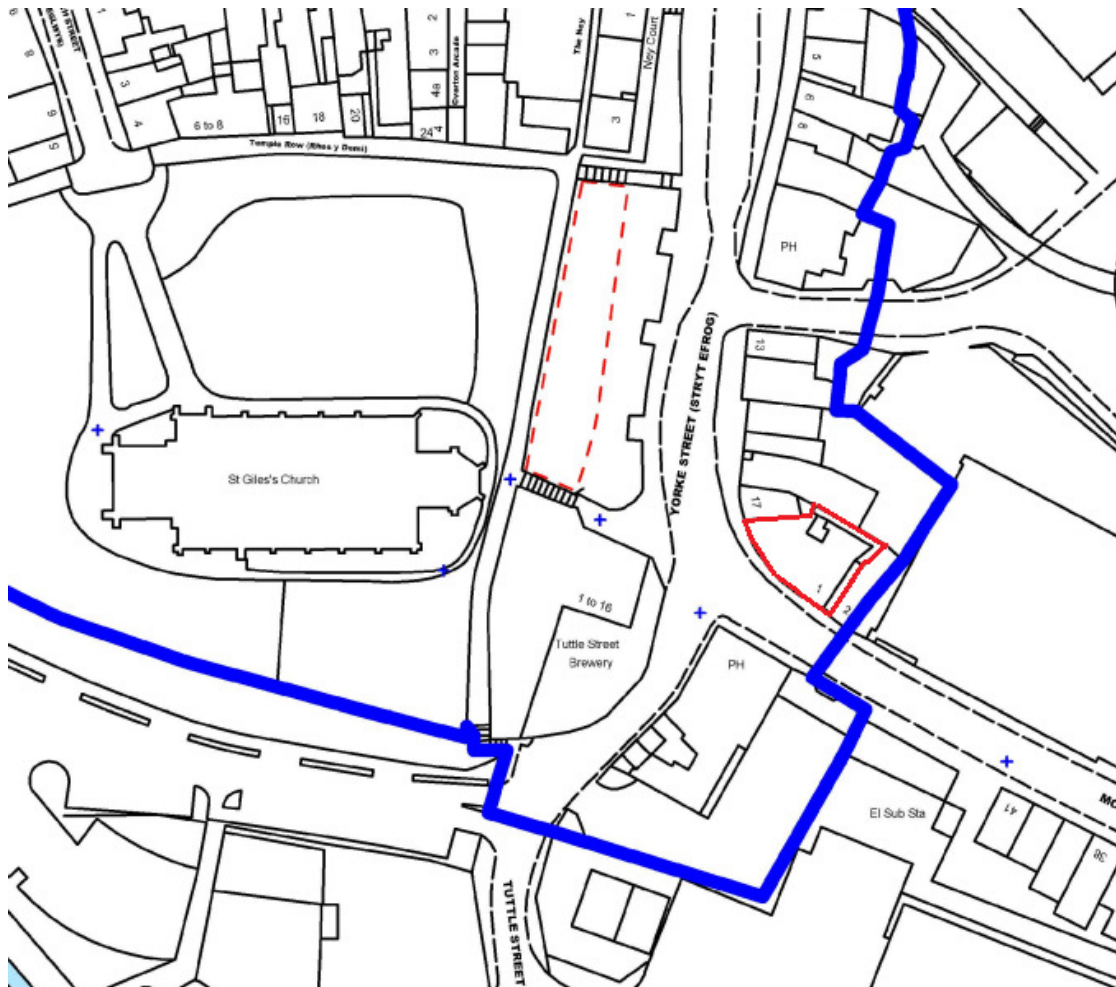
1.3

This Design and Access Statement provides an analysis of the application site and building and sets out the principles that have guided and informed the proposals.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1

The application site comprises a traditional and unusual, 2 storey building of significant character which comprises a street level frontage on to Yorke Street at a point inside the Town Centre Conservation Area. At ground floor level, the building exhibits rich terracotta detailing which identifies the building originally as the “Union Tavern” with links to the “Bents Brewery Co Ltd” and “Liverpool and Stone”. At first floor level, the building is finished with a roughcast render finish. The main feature of the building is the curved, frontage and slated roof slope on to Yorke Street which responds directly to the curvature of the highway in this location and which is unique in the area as far as we aware.



Extract from the Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area Map – application site indicated with a red line boundary.

2.2

The application is located within the Town Centre settlement boundary, in a Shopping Area (S2, S3) and within the Town Conservation Area (EC7, EC8) as defined by the Adopted Unitary Development Plan.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL.

3.1

The proposal is to obtain planning permission, in retrospect, for the removal of 4No. chimney stacks which were removed when works to re-roof the subject building were undertaken earlier this year.

3.2

By way of background, the subject building was jointly inherited by the Applicant, Mrs Alexine Lewis and Mrs Margaret Jones, who is based in the Isle of Man. At the time that the Applicant's husband was contacted by Building Control in February of this year, neither Mrs Lewis nor Mrs Jones were aware of their obligations, responsibilities and liabilities in respect of the subject building. By way of mitigation, the Applicant's husband, Mr Jason Lewis, has prepared a Statement of Events surrounding the original contact with Building Control, the pressure applied upon him as a former Building Contractor who was well known to the Building Control Department, and the series of events that led to :-

- A) The satisfactory re-roofing of the building, and;
- B) The loss of the chimney stacks, without planning permission, in the Conservation Area.

3.3

Mr Lewis' Statement of Events seeks to explain to Members of the Planning Committee how, due to the pressure applied by Building Control, the threat of enforcement action and the lack of advice in terms of the obligations placed upon the property owner because of the property's location in the Conservation Area, the chimney stacks were lost in undertaking the works of re-roofing and making good instigated by the Building Control Department.

3.4

In brief, the main points of Mr Lewis' Statement of Events can be summarised as follows :-

1. In February 2022, contact was received from the Building Control Department insisting that the building be scaffolded immediately to prevent the further loss of debris from the roof onto Yorke Street below following storm damage.

2. The building was to be protected by scaffolding and was to be made safe immediately in order to obviate the need for Enforcement Action to be taken by the County Borough Council to protect the public who were in harms way due to the condition of the slated roof slopes but mainly the masonry chimneys which were in a precarious condition.
3. The Applicant contacted the Buildings Insurance Company but was told that due to years of neglect by the previous owners, the recent storm damage would not be covered as “force majeure” and the applicant and her husband were left to fund the works being demanded by Building Control themselves.
4. Once the costs of making safe and re-roofing the building became known, it became clear that the Applicant and her husband did not have the wherewithal to include the dismantling and rebuilding of chimney stacks as part of the works.
5. At this point, the Applicant was not aware of the planning controls in place governing the retention of the chimney stacks and so conscious the threat of enforcement action looming large, a decision was regrettably taken to dismantle the chimney stacks to below roof level where they would be safe for the foreseeable future.
6. The combination of pressure from Building Control to complete the works, the lack of insurance cover, the limited funds available and the lack of advice from Council Officers that planning permission was required to remove the chimney stacks transpired in the loss of these architectural features.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.

4.1

The application site is located within the Town Centre settlement boundary, in a Shopping Area (S2, S3) and within the Town Conservation Area (EC7, EC8) as defined by the Adopted Unitary Development Plan.

4.2

Policy S2 relates to ground floor retailing proposals and is not relevant to consideration of this application for planning permission. Policy S3 also refers to sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town Centre by a combination of retailing and other commercial uses and is therefore not relevant to the consideration of this application.

4.3

Policy EC7 is relevant to the consideration of the application because of the site's location within the Town Centre Conservation Area. This policy states that *"Within....conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and / or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. New buildings and alterations or additions to the existing buildings in conservation areas, whether listed as of special architectural or historic interest or not, must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and material of existing buildings."* In terms of the subject building and in purely planning and conservation terms, the question must be "Is the character of the subject building, more importantly the roof slope and it's contribution to the street scene, diminished or preserved and enhanced by the removal of the chimney stacks?"

4.4

It is contended that this is special case without precedent elsewhere within the town and the Conservation Area. This is because the curvature of the building and the roofscape is unique and it is this curvature which benefits from a lack of punctuation by chimney stacks. Whilst I am not in possession of photographs which show the former chimney stacks, the drone photographs below show a number of things including :-

1. The curved roof slopes of the subject building have been expertly re-slanted using a combination and new and recycled, natural Welsh slate which enhances the immediate street scene and the appearance of the

townscape group.

2. The quality of the roof coverings and the overall appearance are enhanced by the simple, curved ridge line which is free of punctuation by brickwork chimney stacks.
3. Whilst it is accepted that generally, chimney stacks add to the quality and appearance of traditional slated roof slopes, the photographs below show that this is not the case with the subject building. The appearance of the roof scape of the building itself and it's setting within the wider street scene is enhanced by the loss of the chimney stacks.



Drone photograph from the north west looking south east across the front elevation of the building.



Drone photograph from the north east looking south west across the rear elevation of the building.

4.5

Adopted Policy EC8 relates to demolition of buildings in a conservation area but can be analysed insofar as it relates to the demolition of the chimney stack features. Policy EC8 states that *“The demolition of any building in a conservation area will not be permitted unless, in exceptional circumstances :-*

- a) The building or structure is beyond reasonable repair; or*
- b) Demolition would be a positive benefit to the conservation area's enhancement;*

4.6

It is the case that it is not now possible to say with certainty that the chimney stacks which were dismantled were beyond reasonable repair although the Statement of Events given by the Applicant's husband clearly states that in his professional opinion as a Building Contractor of many years standing, the chimney stacks were beyond repair and required nothing less than re-building, something that was not possible with the time and funds available. In addition to this and as expounded in paragraph 4.4 above, demolition of the chimney stacks has generated a *“positive benefit to the conservation area's*

enhancement". This is because the building's overall form which includes curvature of the slated roof slopes, represents a special case where the simple nature of the curved ridge line is enhanced by the loss of the punctuating chimney stacks.

4.7

The subject building is identified as a "Building of visual interest or important townscape group" in the Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan. The arguments above at paragraphs 4.4 and 4.6 are not in any way diminished by this designation because it has been possible to show that in this particular case, the character and appearance of the building, notably the slated roof slopes and it's setting within the wider street scene have not been harmed but rather, have been enhanced by the loss of the chimney stacks which previously disturbed the balance and flow of this unique roof structure.

4.8

In terms of planning policy, it has been shown that the removal of the former chimney stacks is in compliance with adopted local planning and supplementary planning guidance having regard to the unique nature of the subject building and the curved roof structure.

5.0 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 :-

- Preserve and enhance the character and form of the existing building and in particular the unique, curved slated roof slope which gives the corner of Yorke Street a clear character.

- Provide a development which achieves the aims and objectives of adopted UDP policies for this type of residential development

In conclusion, this Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposals are in accordance with adopted local planning policy and supplementary planning guidance for the treatment of buildings within the Town Centre Conservation Area.

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. October 2022.

For and on behalf of Mrs A. Lewis.

Appendix A.

Photographs.



Close up image indicating the general condition of the roof coverings pre-development showing many slipped and missing slates with previous attempts to repair the damage.



Wider image of the former condition of the roof slates showing slipped and missing slates and slipped lead flashing.



View of the front elevation to Yorke Street post-development.



View of the rear elevation of the building post development.



Aerial view of the roof slope facing Yorke Street post-development.



Aerial view of the roof slope facing Yorke Street post-development.



Aerial view of the rear facing roof slope post-development.

