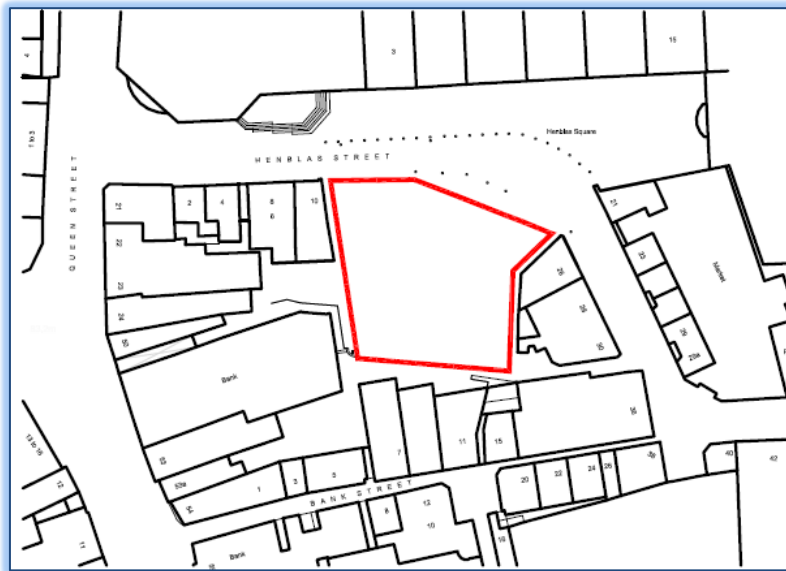


PLANNING STATEMENT

On behalf of
Hindle Property Investments Ltd

Site of the Former Hippodrome
Henblas Street, Wrexham LL13 8AD

Construction of 2 retail units and 13 no apartments



August 2018

Martin Planning Ltd
Planning Consultants
1 Sandlebridge Farm
Mill Lane
Alderley Edge, SK9 7TD

Tel: 07772 952663

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This statement has been prepared by Martin Planning Ltd for submission as part a planning application made to Wrexham County Borough Council by Studio KMA on behalf of:

Hindle Property Investments Ltd
Hindle House
Tan House Lane
Parbold
Wigan
WN8 7HG

Dated: 30 August 2018

PLANNING STATEMENT

Construction of 2 retail units and 13 no apartments

Site of the Former Hippodrome, Henblas Street, Wrexham LL13 8AD

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of Hindle Property Investments Ltd in support of a planning application for the redevelopment of the site of the former Hippodrome, Henblas Street, Wrexham.
- 1.2 The application site is in a prominent and central location within Wrexham town centre and has been vacant for many years. The proposal, which is for the construction of 2 no. retail units with 13 no. studios/ apartments, provides the opportunity to re-energise the site and inject investment into the town centre.
- 1.3 In accordance with local and national planning policy objectives the proposal will reinforce the retail offer within the town centre and will also deliver housing on a brownfield site in a highly sustainable location.
- 1.4 The submission of the planning application follows positive pre-application discussions with the local authority.

2. Application Site

- 2.1 The application site was formerly the location of the Wrexham Hippodrome, built in 1909 on the site of the former public hall. This operated for many years until its closure in 1998. In 2008 a fire severely damaged the property which led to its demolition in 2009. The site has since remained vacant. It was purchased by the applicant in Spring 2018.
- 2.2 Located within Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area, the site comprises vacant land extending to about 0.07 hectares. It has a prominent frontage to Henblas Street within the central retail area and currently portrays a poor image in the streetscene which detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2.3 The property is identified edged red by the Location Plan below.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (Source: Studio KMA)

2.4 Given its prominent location it is clearly evident that the site would benefit from a scheme of improvement and regeneration.

3. Proposal

3.1 The proposal is to construct 2 no. retail units with 13 no. studios/ apartments above.

Schedule of the Retail Accommodation:

Retail Unit 1: Gross Internal Area - 200 m²

Retail Unit 2: Gross Internal Area – 282 m²

3.2 In terms of service access, the proposals include for separate access doors for both the retail units and the residential accommodation to the rear and side of the proposed development. In addition, there will be self-contained and secure internal areas for retail and residential refuse and recycling.

- 3.3 The apartments will be located above the retail units over two floors. The entrance to these will be from Henblas Street into a central lobby. There will be both stair and lift access from there to the upper floors above. Cycle storage is provided for 42 no. cycles on the ground floor.
- 3.4 All apartments provide 1 bed accommodation, either as studios or 1 bed apartments. They are aimed at a range of occupiers including entry market level for those wanting to work locally within Wrexham, resident students or downsizers wanting smaller or more manageable accommodation with access to local facilities and for residents that are not yet in car ownership and/or don't require a car – hence living in the town centre for work, transport links and amenities.

Schedule of Residential Accommodation

Studios – 10 units

1 bed apartments – 3 units

- 3.5 Further details regarding the design of the development are provided in the Design and Access Statement.

4. Planning History

- 4.1 Whilst the site has a long history, its planning history is relatively limited as confirmed by the table below. Relevant to this proposal planning consent was previously granted for the redevelopment of the site for retail use in 2006.

Application No.	Proposal	Decision
P/2005/1142	Demolition of existing building and the construction of A1 retail units Hollins Murray Group	Granted January 2006

Figure 2: Planning History

5. Planning Policy and Guidance

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 In coming forward with this proposal consideration has been given to the following planning policy background. Specifically:

- National Planning Policy for Wales;
- Wrexham Unitary Development Plan – adopted February 2005;
- Local Planning Guidance.

5.2 National Planning Policy

Wales Spatial Plan

5.2.1 The broad 20 year vision is contained within the Wales Spatial Plan, adopted in 2004 and updated in 2008. This sets the scene for local and community planning. It is a principle of the Wales Spatial Plan that development should be sustainable.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

5.2.2 The 9th Edition of this policy guidance was issued in November 2016 and provides a general framework of planning policy for Wales. Pertinent to this proposal are:

- Chapter 4 : Planning for Sustainability
- Chapter 6 : The Historic Environment
- Chapter 8 : Transport
- Chapter 9 : Housing
- Chapter 10: Retail and Commercial Development.

5.2.3 Key points to draw from this guidance are as follows:

- The presumption in favour of sustainable development (Para 4.2.2);
- The promotion of sustainability through good design (Para 4.11.1);

- The objective to reduce the need to travel, especially by private car and by locating development where there is good access by walking, cycling and public transport (Para 8.1.5);
- The importance of protecting, managing and conserving the historic environment (Para 6.2.1);
- The objective to promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres as the most sustainable locations to live, work, shop, socialise and conduct business (Para 10.1.2);
- The Welsh Government adopts the ‘town centres first’ principle whereby consideration should always firstly be given to locating new retail and commercial development within an existing centre (Para 10.1.4);
- The recognition that in town centres mixed use schemes, including residential, can provide longer periods of activity and usage over the course of a day resulting in the creation of safer places (Para 10.2.7);
- The application of the sequential approach to all retail development and the support of this approach. The approach reinforces the vibrancy, viability and attractiveness of retail and commercial centres. (Para 10.2.13)
- The introduction of residential uses may help contribute to the viability and vitality of the centre and should be encouraged on floors above ground level, including in primary areas (Para 10.3.7);
- The emphasis on the use of previously developed land for housing in preference to greenfield sites (Para 9.1.1);
- The promotion of sustainable residential environments (Para 9.1.2).

Technical Advice Notes (TANS)

5.2.4 The above is supplemented by various technical notes. Of relevance here are:

- TAN 4 – Retail and Commercial Development (2016)
- TAN 12 – Design (2016)
- TAN18 – Transport (2017)
- TAN 24 - The Historic Environment (2017)

5.2.5 Relevant to the current proposal, **TAN4 – Retail and Commercial Development** confirms the Welsh Government’s objectives for retail and commercial centres are to:

- Promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres, as the most sustainable locations to live, work, shop, socialise and conduct business.
- Sustain and enhance retail and commercial centres vibrancy, viability and attractiveness.
- Improve access to, and within, retail and commercial centres by all modes of transport, especially walking, cycling and public transport.

5.2.6 In support of this the sequential test is adopted on a ‘centre first’ approach (Section 7).

5.2.7 In addition, the TAN also states that the role that residential uses can play in supporting centres should be recognised, confirming that whilst residential use is unlikely to be appropriate at ground floor level in primary areas, residential use on upper floors can add to a centres vibrancy and viability, increasing footfall and contributing to both the daytime and evening economies of a centre (Para 9.2).

5.2.8 The importance of good design is acknowledged in **TAN 12 – Design**. In this regard, there is strong commitment to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environment which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion (Para 2.2).

5.2.9 Relevant to sustainability considerations **TAN18 – Transport** advises that in determining an appropriate development pattern, local planning authorities should seek to maximise relative accessibility rather than ensuring everyone can travel everywhere (mobility) (Para 3.2). The location of new residential development is seen to have a significant influence on travel patterns as the majority of trips start or finish at home. As a consequence, the relationship between homes and other land uses will influence travel demand in terms of mode of travel, length of journey and the potential for multi-purpose trips. As such, it should be a key aim of development plans to identify residential sites that are accessible to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car (Para 3.3).

5.2.10 **TAN 24 – The Historic Environment** develops the objectives set out in Chapter 6 of PPW. It states that many conservation areas include the commercial centres of towns and villages. In these locations there will generally be an emphasis on controlled and positive management of change that encourages economic vibrancy and social and cultural vitality, and accords with the area’s special architectural and historic qualities.

5.2.11 Furthermore, there is recognition that many conservation areas include sites or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from the character or appearance of the area; their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high-quality design and an opportunity to enhance the area (Para 6.7). As part of this there is acceptance that changes in the historic environment are inevitable (Para 1.8).

5.3 Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (2005)

5.3.1 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, adopted in February 2005, further sets out a variety of objectives and policies against which the proposal should be tested.

5.3.2 Pertinent to the application proposal, strategic policies identifying the broad location of development (**Policies PS1 – PS4**) confirm that:

- New development will be directed to within defined settlements;
- Development must not materially detrimentally affect the landscape/townscape character;
- Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict and underused land in preference to greenfield land;
- Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and integrate with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.

5.3.3 The Proposals Map of the UDP (extract overleaf) confirms the location of the site within a defined settlement and shows the application site to be on a Principal Shopping Street (yellow notation) within a Conservation Area (brown edging).

5.3.4 The objective of **Policy S1** – Shopping Streets in Wrexham Town Centre is to protect the integrity of the retail offer.

5.3.5 **Policy EC7** – Conservation Areas requires priority to be given to preserving and enhancing those aspects that contribute to its unique character. It advises that new buildings must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.

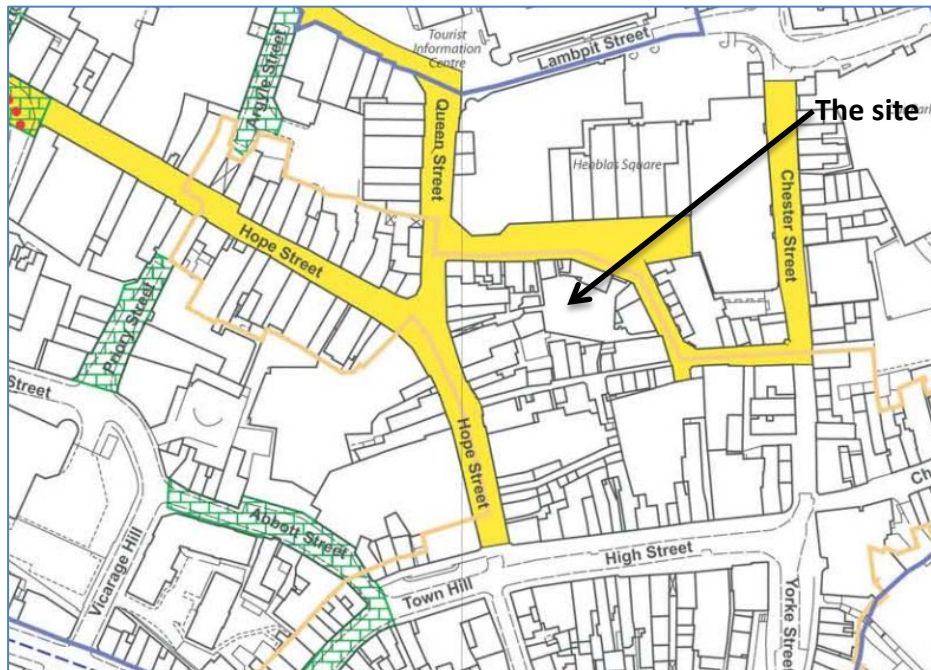


Figure 3: Extract from the Wrexham UDP

- 5.3.6 General Development Objectives set out in **Policy GDP1** specify how new development should be brought forward having regard to a variety of issues including design, community safety, sustainability, amenity standards, services, flooding and promoting economic, social and environmental wellbeing.
- 5.3.7 There is also further specific detail on development control matters in **Policy EC13** - Surface Water Run-off and **Policy T8** – Parking.

5.4 Local Planning Guidance

- 5.4.1 Of additional relevance are the following:

LPG10 - Public Open Space;
LPG 16 – Parking
LPG21 - Space around dwellings
LPG32 – Biodiversity and Development
LPGN27 – Contributions to Schools

Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan
Wrexham Town Centre Master Plan

5.5 Policy Appraisal

5.5.1 The proposal has responded to this policy background in the following way:

- It forms sustainable development within a defined settlement in accordance with the Wales Spatial Plan, Chapter 4 of PPW and Policy PS1 of the UDP, for which there is a positive presumption in favour of sustainable development in Para 4.2.2 of PPW;
- It utilises brownfield land, encouraged by PPW Para 9.1.1 and Policy PS3 of the UDP;
- It delivers retail development within Wrexham town centre. This accords with the sequential approach to retail development set out in PPW Para 10.1.4, 10.2.13 and TAN4 as a way of reinforcing the vibrancy, viability and attractiveness of retail and commercial centres. Policy S1 of the UDP also seeks to protect the retail offer on principal shopping streets, such as Henblas Street;
- It brings forward a mixed use scheme, by including residential, as supported by PPW Para 10.2.7 as a way of providing longer periods of activity and usage over the course of a day resulting in the creation of safer places. By delivering housing on the upper floors, which is encouraged by PPW Para 10.3.7 and TAN4 Para 9.2, it will make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- Its design has been informed by the importance of Conservation Policy found in all tiers of planning policy. Specifically it will regenerate a redundant site which has lain vacant for many years and will deliver a high quality development which has taken its design cues from the surrounding area. In so doing it will deliver the objectives of PPW Chapter 6, TAN 24 and Policy EC7 of the UDP by enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is further addressed in Section 6.5 below;
- Its design philosophy is committed to achieving high quality design in accordance with TAN 12 and promotes sustainability within the design in accordance with PPW - Para 4.11.1.
- It responds to General Development Objectives Policy GDP1 of the UDP. In this regard the proposal:
 - Forms built development that is in keeping with the scale, design and layout of the streetscene;
 - Takes account of community safety and security by delivering a mixed use development that will increase footfall both in the day and evening;
 - Delivers a high standard of development which has been designed to fit in with the context of the location;

- Ensures safe and convenient access for its customers and residents;
 - Provides convenient access to public transport facilities;
 - Safeguards the safety and amenity of residents. For example, by incorporating appropriate sound insulation;
 - Secures public services to the development;
 - Delivers highly sustainable development.
- It take account of highway policy in TAN18 by using a site that maximises its accessibility and reduces the need to travel in accordance with PPW Para 8.1.5.

5.5.2 The planning policy background therefore provides a strong policy base which supports proposals that deliver high quality mixed use development in sustainable locations on a brownfield site and which will regenerate a vacant site whilst also taking account of heritage and development control considerations.

6. Planning Considerations

6.1 Principle of Development

6.1.1 The principle for a development of this type is supported on many levels as follows:

- It brings forward a mixed use development;
- It reuses a vacant brownfield site that has been vacant for many years;
- It injects investment into Wrexham town centre;
- It will enhance the Conservation Area;
- It will improve the streetscene;
- It will generate more activity/footfall within the town centre;
- It will bring forward a high quality of development;
- It is highly sustainable.

6.1.2 As such the proposal accords with Policies PS1, GDP1 and S1 of the UDP and has strong policy support within PPW.

6.2 Sustainability

6.2.1 The importance of sustainability is echoed in all tiers of planning policy. In this case the proposal will achieve:

- **Economic sustainability** by investing within a Principal Shopping Street in Wrexham town centre. It will create jobs and will inject investments into the town centre economy;
- **Social sustainability** by bringing further residents into the town centre, which will lead to greater vibrancy within the centre;
- **Environmental sustainability** by focusing development within the urban area in a highly sustainable location. The scheme design also promotes sustainability by the use of energy efficient design and the reuse of a brownfield site.

6.2.2 As a result, it is considered that the proposal meets all sustainability objectives as encouraged by planning policy and for which there is a presumption in favour of development where this is achieved.

6.3 Housing Need

6.3.1 The proposal will bring forward a high quality scheme with a mix of studio apartments to meet the needs of a variety of sectors of the populations – entry level residents, downsizers, students and single people. It will offer 13 no. 1 bedroom studios/apartments.

6.3.2 In this regard, the Housing Need Strategy – The New Housing Landscape (2018-2023) (Para 3.8) records that within the County Borough single person households will see the highest numerical growth of all household types. They are set to increase by 4,259 households or 22% over a 10 year period. The proposal will therefore meet a specific housing need.

6.3.3 PPW (Para 10.2.7) recognises that mixed use schemes in town centres that include residential further have an added benefit in that they provide longer periods of activity and usage over the course of a day resulting in the creation of safer places. In this context the introduction of residential apartments will help to contribute to the viability and vitality of the centre. In accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Para 10.3.7) these are particularly encouraged on floors above ground level, including in primary areas, as is the case with the application site.

6.4 Retail Considerations

- 6.4.1 The applicant recognises the importance of the high street as a focus for retail development and uses that are complementary to this.
- 6.4.2 Sequentially the site scores highly being within the principal retail area of a town centre. This reinforces the vibrancy, viability and attractiveness of retail and commercial centres
- 6.4.3 The site also forms part of the Wrexham Town Centre Master Plan the aspiration for which is to see more investment in vacant sites and the encouragement of further residential development.
- 6.4.4 The proposal will increase footfall in the locality to the benefit of the surrounding retail offer.

6.5 Heritage

- 6.5.1 The Historic Environment Record for Wales (extract below) shows various historic assets, in the vicinity of the application site including the Conservation Area (shaded blue) and several listed buildings. There is a cluster of these focussed around the general market buildings where Henblas Street doglegs south away from the application site.

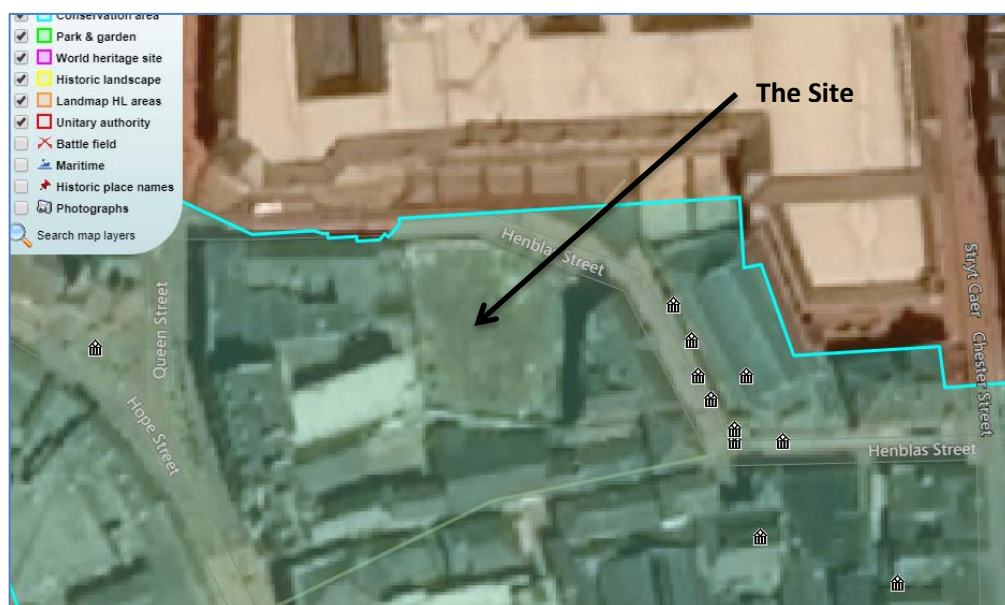


Figure 4: Extract from the Historic Environment Record

6.5.2 The Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1974. More recently the Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan (CACAMP) was adopted in January 2009. This summarises the special character of the conservation area to include:

- Its medieval street pattern;
- Pedestrian Links;
- Variety of Building Materials;
- Landmarks;
- Focal Areas and Vistas;
- The contribution made by unlisted buildings;
- Elevation features;
- Green and open spaces;

6.5.2 The application site forms part of the Character Area described as the Retail Core and is given a specific mention. It states:

“The former hippodrome cinema opened onto Henblas Street and encompasses much of the area to the rear of this street. It was closed in 1997 and the site is now due for redevelopment following a period of neglect and subsequent fire in 2008”.

6.5.3 In the context of the surrounding area it states:

“The humble small scale buildings lining the south side of Henblas Square, Henblas Street and Bank Street are largely of early 19th century pre-Victorian style and are all that remain of that period following re-development in the mid to late 19th and early 20th centuries. They are a mixture of styles but broadly follow a pattern of 2 storey, narrow-fronted, domestic scale buildings with sliding sash windows to the upper floors and traditional shopfronts below. They are a mixture of brick, painted brick or render finishes with slate roofs.”

6.5.4 In setting out the management of this area and specifically proposals for the former Hippodrome it states:

“It is crucial that the scale and diversity of the surrounding architecture is respected and that an imaginative and high-quality design is employed to re-strengthen the cohesion of the street and give continuity to the scale, rhythm and rich detailing of the architecture of the existing streetscape in accordance with section 7.0”.

6.5.4 The proposal has had particular regard to these heritage considerations. Taking account of the fundamentals of good design the scheme seeks to understand and respond to this context. Specifically:

- The regeneration of the site will significantly improve the appearance of the site, which the CACAMP states is neglected;
- It will follow the existing street pattern and responds to the streetscape;
- It will follow the building line of adjacent properties;
- The proposal has been individually designed having regard to the characteristics of the location rather than to any specific retailer template;
- The development will infill the gap between No 10 and No 26 and will make a continuous street frontage;
- The height of the building corresponds to the context of the locality, which is three storeys and will then step down and reduce in height adjacent to No 10, which is lower in height;
- The inclusion of gables is intended to break up the elevation into traditional units, taking design cues from the neighbouring properties.
- The materials will take their palette from those surrounding and will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority;
- The design of the fenestration is intended to create rhythm to the building, whilst also maintaining continuity in its form;
- The scale and form of the proposal has been designed so that it is proportionate to the location;
- Importantly the scheme will create an active street frontage.

6.5.5 Overall the proposal will improve the visual character of the Conservation Area. In so doing and having regard to the scheme's attributes in protecting and enhancing a heritage asset the proposal will accord with Policy EN7 of the UDP.

6.6 Transport and Movement

6.6.1 As previously set out, the application site is accessible with access to local services. It meets sustainability objectives being accessible to a range of travel modes and with good pedestrian links.

6.6.2 In relation to the parking guidance set out in LPG 16 – Parking this notes that:

“Reduced Reliance/Car Free Housing Proposals for reduced reliance/car free housing, as supported by TAN 18 - Transport, will be considered on their own merits. It is likely that only small scale sites will be suitable for such developments where they are demonstrated to be within walking distance to frequent public transport and accessible to a range of employment, shopping and leisure facilities. Where reduced reliance/car free developments are proposed, the Council will need to be satisfied that they will not cause or exacerbate parking problems.”

6.6.3 Due to its highly accessible location the proposal is for car free housing. There will be ample cycling storage for 42 no. cycles, the site is only a 7 minute walk to the bus station and the site is within walking distance of a whole range of services and facilities.

6.6.4 The management of construction traffic will be addressed as part of a Construction Management Plan, which can be effectively controlled by condition if required.

6.7 Amenity

6.7.1 The accommodation within the apartments is open plan with the studio design providing all required including living, dining, kitchen and sleeping accommodation alongside adequate storage provision and a desk area.

6.7.2 The windows will either front Henblas Street or face to the rear of the building to accommodate amenity standards set out in LPG21 - Space around dwellings.

6.7.3 Given the proximity to areas of public open space, such as Bellevue Park, less than 0.4 miles away and a 9 minute walk it is not intended to provide additional private open space on site.

6.8 Education

- 6.8.1 As the development is for 1 bed apartments it is noted that no contribution to education is required.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 In conclusion, we consider that the principle of development is acceptable in this location as it accords with the provisions of the Development Plan and other planning guidance. Further the scheme will deliver a whole range of benefits in meeting retail and housing needs whilst also bringing life back to a site which requires investment and renewal.
- 7.2 The site has been vacant for many years. The proposal provides the opportunity to reinvigorate this area of Wrexham and improve the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.3 Having regard to the contents of the statement and the other documents submitted with the application we therefore request that planning permission is granted. Should you require any further information or explanation please let us know.