

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Conversion of Existing Building
to
Artist Studio & Gallery (Use Class A1)
and Apartment above (Use Class C3)
at

BUILDING TO THE REAR OF
17 – 19, PEN Y BRYN
WREXHAM
LL13 7HU



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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 former commercial / storage building to an Artist's Studio and Gallery at first floor together with a one bedroom apartment at second floor level in accordance with the submitted plans and external elevations supplied.

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 sets out to justify the principles that have guided and informed the design.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1

The application site comprises a regular shaped parcel of land situated immediately behind, to the south east of the part commercial and part residential property known as 17 – 19, Pen y Bryn. The site is generally square in proportion and the existing building occupies the south eastern half of the land. The building is separated from the 17 – 19, Pen y Bryn with a section of open land which amounts to around 50% of the whole site.

2.2

Little is known about the history of the site / building but it is likely that it was previously used as some form of workshop or storage facility. Since the property was purchased by the applicants in 1999, the lower ground floor level has remained vacant, the upper ground or first floor has been used casually

for storage of building materials and plant (Use Class B8) and the second floor has been used as an artist's studio by one of the applicants for period now in excess of 20 years. This application seeks to formally regularize this use to combine a Studio and Gallery / Shop for sale of Art at first floor level (Use Class A1) and provide a one bedroom apartment above at second floor level (Use Class C3).

2.3

The site is served by a pedestrian right of way enjoyed by the applicants through a passageway at ground floor level between No's 17 and 19, Pen y Bryn. This passageway also provides pedestrian access to the four apartments which occupy the first and second floor levels of No's 17 – 19.

2.4

The site is bounded to the north west by No's 17 – 19, Pen y Bryn, to the north east and south east by the buildings and car parking areas associated with a Doctor's Surgery / Health Centre and to the south west by recent residential development combining townhouses and apartments.

2.5

The existing building is a large and imposing, three storey structure which is finished in a red clay facing brick with a pitched roof covered with natural Welsh slate. A scheme of renovation was undertaken a few years ago which involved repairs to the roof, re-pointing of the brickwork elevations and replacement of windows. The building, by virtue of its scale and massing, age and use of traditional materials represents a relatively imposing landmark in this area between the busy commercial street, Pen y Bryn and the traditional residential area of Poplar Road. The building is located adjacent to but just outside the Salisbury Park Conservation Area and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and consequently the conversion to a viable, alternative end use is important to ensure the long term survival of the building and its ongoing, positive contribution to the character and appearance of the locality. The proposed development which

forms part of this application will not involve any external alterations to the existing building.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL.

3.1

The proposal is to convert the upper ground floor or first floor to an Artist's Studio and Gallery for the sale of Art and Crafts together with the provision of a one bedroomed apartment at second floor level. External access will be gained at first floor level from the existing door opening via the existing brickwork and concrete steps, providing access to the Gallery Shop and Studio. A private doorway will also be provided to give access to the existing staircase which leads to the second floor accommodation.

3.2

The development will involve the retention of the existing building in its current form and there are to be no external alterations to the building.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.

4.1

The site is located in an area designated for Mixed Use Regeneration as defined by the Adopted Unitary Development Plan. The site is also located adjacent to but outside the Salisbury Park Conservation Area. Pen y Bryn is characterised by a combination of commercial properties and dwellings at street level (convenience stores, service providers, pubs, takeaways, furniture shops, hairdressers etc) with predominantly residential accommodation above street level.

4.2

Accordingly the following locally adopted planning policy H13 contained in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan is a relevant consideration in this matter :-

Bridge Street/Cambrian Yard Regeneration, Wrexham

Policy H13 The regeneration of the Bridge Street/Cambrian Yard area of Wrexham of 4.73 hectares will be undertaken. In addition to property and environmental improvements a measure of redevelopment is proposed to include the Cambrian Yard site. The main land uses within the regeneration area will comprise residential development, business development (Class B1) and shopping provision for local needs.

4.3

Policy H13 is identified as being of specific relevance on the Wrexham Town Centre Inset Map. Accordingly the change of use of this building is appropriate in this particular location where the importance of giving life to the area by bringing in new commercial uses and residents to live here is an important consideration. Additionally the narrative of this policy goes on to say the following :-

6.23 In 2002, the Council endorsed a regeneration strategy and action plan for the Bridge Street/Cambrian Yard area of Wrexham. The area has a very high profile adjoining Wrexham Town Centre, with frontage to the inner ring road and on a major gateway into the town centre. It adjoins two conservation areas, and contains a number of fine buildings which the action plan seeks to retain and enhance. New development will therefore need to be of a particularly high quality design. Among the key proposals in the action plan is the development of some 260 units of high density housing, within a well designed, mixed use environment. Given the location of the site and the type of housing to be provided, reduced car parking standards are likely to be appropriate. The lower parts of the site lie within a flood risk area, and development will need to incorporate hard flood defences that meet the requirements of Environment Agency Wales.

4.4

The appropriateness of reduced car parking standards in this location having regard to the site's location within immediate walking distance of extensive local amenities is an important consideration in this case because within the

application site, there is no potential to provide on site car parking. This site's location mitigates the need for car ownership and allows the creation of a highly sustainable form of commercial and residential development.

5.0 DESIGN

5.1

Good design is an all embracing concept. This 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 existing building provides approximately 70 square metres or 750 square feet of internal accommodation at both first and second floor levels. The submitted drawings indicate that with very little internal alteration, it is possible to provide a Gallery / Shop for public visitors and customers together with a large Studio for the creation of art for sale on the premises. Furthermore, the second floor provides space for generous, one bedroomed living accommodation linked to the Studio and Gallery at first floor level.

5.3 Layout.

The layout of the development is dictated by the nature, massing and scale of the existing buildings. Pedestrian access will be provided in the existing and established way.

5.4 Scale.

The scale of the development is dictated purely by the scale of the existing structures as it is deemed important that the conversion must take place within the existing built envelope where extensions and significant external alterations would detract from the character and appearance of the existing building.

5.5 Landscaping.

The area to the between the building and the rear of No's 17 – 19, Pen y Bryn is currently hard surfaced and it would not be appropriate to introduce any soft landscaping in this location. However the retention of this low maintenance surface with the addition of some vertical, structural planting either within pots or within holes punched through the concrete surface would significantly improve residential amenity in a low maintenance way which would be more likely to be maintained for the benefit of the residents of the existing building and the adjacent occupants of 17 – 19, Pen y Bryn.

5.6 Character and Appearance.

The existing building, as set out in paragraph 2.5 above, represents an imposing presence in this locality which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area. Externally, the building is in good condition and it is not proposed to undertake any external alterations as part of the proposed development. The building will continue to contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area whilst being put to beneficial use.

6.0 ACCESSIBILITY AND MOVEMENT.

6.1

Local planning policy GDP1, subsection e) requires that development sites are located in an area with good public transport provision. The site is located close to the town centre and in reach of all local amenities including shops, public parks, numerous schools, doctor's surgeries, pharmacies, pubs etc. The site is therefore in an accessible location and has good access to public transport facilities. This constitutes a sustainable location for residential development in accordance with the aims and objectives of this particular adopted local planning policy.

6.2

Access to the subject building is available via a passageway or accessway which runs centrally between No's 17 and 19, Pen y Bryn and via an external access door opening out on to Pen y Bryn which is currently used by the four apartments which occupy the first and second floors of this building. Due to fact that the door on to Pen y Bryn is located some 20 metres away from the access door to the existing building, it is proposed to install an intercom system between the access to Pen y Bryn and the Gallery in order to facilitate effective access to the proposed development by visitors.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

In summary, the proposed conversion of the existing building to provide an Artist's Studio and Gallery Shop with a one bedroomed residential apartment above as identified as part of this application for planning permission has striven to achieve the following aims and objectives :-

- Achieve an acceptable scheme of conversion which complies with the identified planning policies and to a good standard of design in order to preserve and enhance for the long term an existing building which forms an important part of the character and appearance of the locality.

- Provide a unit of residential accommodation within the fabric of this locally important building which enjoys a good level of residential amenity.
- Bring this under used building back in to full occupation in order to preserve it in the long term in the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the area.

In conclusion, this Design and Access Statement has demonstrated that the conversion of this building to commercial and residential use is possible in accordance with adopted planning policy and the principles of good design.

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

D.S. Jones & Co. June 2020.

For and on behalf of Mr. J.E. Price & Mr. D.V. Roberts.