

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROJECT- CHAPTER COURT WREXHAM.



JANUARY 2020.

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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Chapter Court — To create a new retail and leisure facility through the use of 'Micro Retail and Micro Food Court' areas utilizing the existing group of commercial properties and rear court yard area along Hope Street, Queen Street, Argyle Road and Rhosddu Road in Wrexham, North Wales.

Job Ref: R362- St James Regeneration, Wrexham.

December 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Richard Andrews Architects in support of a full planning application at the following site:

Wrexham Town Centre utilizing the existing units along Hope Street, Queen Street, Argyle Road and Rhosddu Road. As highlighted for improvement as Key Site 4 within the Aspirational Town Centre Designation of the Town Centre Master Plan.

This document describes the key considerations which influenced the design proposed for the application site. It demonstrates a clear understanding of the context in order to inform an appropriate design response.

The proposals have been developed over a period of approximately 12 months.

The Design and Access Statement responds to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(Wales) Order 2012. It explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposals as well as the way in which access requirements have been considered and addressed.

The Structure and content of the statement has been informed by Technical Advice Note 12:Design (July 2014) which sets out guidance on the preparation of Design and Access Statements. Therefore it will endeavour to explain the design concepts and principles that have been applied which relate to;

- Accessibility and movement to, from and within the development.
- Character (including amount, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping)
- Community Safety
- Environmental Sustainability.

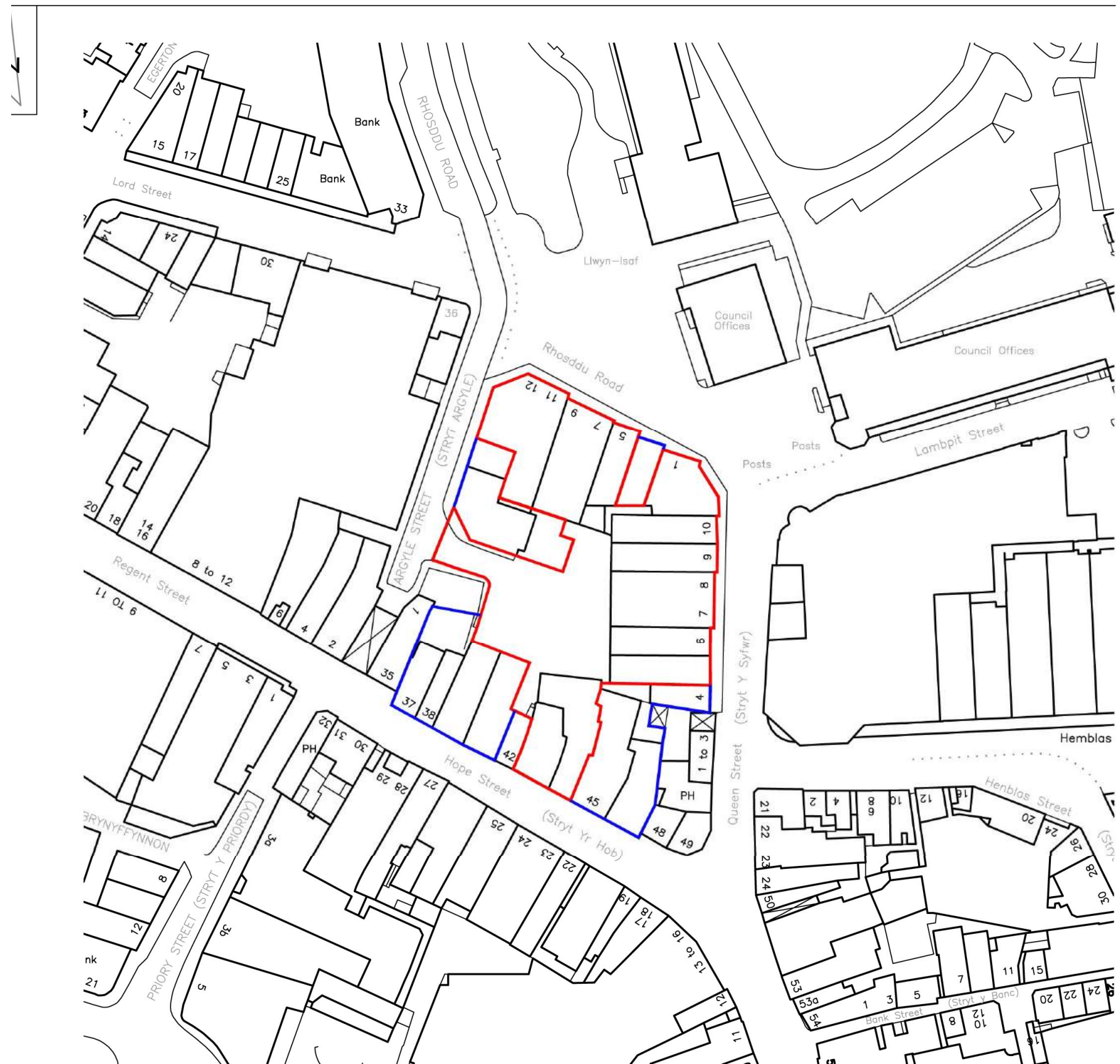


Figure 1.1.1- Extract From the Current Ordinance Survey Illustrating the Application Site within its Neighbouring Context.



Figure 1.2.1- Proposed Scheme—Artists Impression of the court yard area.



Figure 1.2.2- Proposed Scheme—Artists Impression from first floor looking into the court yard.

1.2 Vision Statement/Background

Wrexham town centre is supported by a wide range of sub-regional services including Glyndwr University, Coleg Cambria and Wrexham Maelor Hospital. This town has the benefits of several tourist attractions, as well as nearby countryside and industrial estate.

While the town center is relatively healthy and has seen significant growth over the last 20 years there is a sense the town lacks identity. The center is dominated by discount retailers, lacks an evening economy and in some areas beginning to look tired and at times unattractive. Gaps in the restaurant sector and in higher quality retail sector have been identified.

The applicant site has seen a down turn in recent years, with lots of retailers moving out of the area to the new Eagles Meadow shopping complex in another area of the town.

This area also competes with other retail parks near to town which offer customers the convenience of free parking, longer opening hours and shops 'all-under one roof'.

Chapter Court aims to attract national high street retailers back to the original end of town, but also attract smaller, more independent local businesses to create a 'micro retailing' hub for Wrexham. Along with 'go-to' places to eat and drink and with the development of the court yard that can host year round events will offer customers a new, cultural shopping and leisure experience giving them a reason for return visits.

Our vision is to establish the town center as a thriving destination by encouraging a wider diversity of uses. The proposed design aims to achieve this by;

- Building on the town center strong sub-regional position as a major shopping destination, diversifying the offer and developing complementary leisure, cultural and arts attractions in an attractive environment.
- Developing an attractive and distinctive environment with high quality buildings, streets and spaces to enhance the character of the town and support the town center strategies for retail and visitors.

- Ensuring high quality access to and through the Town center by a range of modes, prioritizing walking, cycling and public transport, but maintaining high quality road access to the center;
- Improving the quality of the public realm to improve places for people to meet, use and enjoy.

Wrexham Local Service Board, 2013-2024 and Wrexham Town Centre Master plan have three interlinked objectives which are;

1. Making Wrexham a place where people can live independently and are healthy and active;
2. Making Wrexham a place with a strong, resilient and responsible economy; and
3. Making Wrexham a place that's safe and where everyone feels included;

The proposed design takes into consideration the interlinked objectives stated above to create a feel that Wrexham town centre is a happening place, modern and full of energy. This will be achieved as there will be more;

- New business starting up or locating to Wrexham County Borough.
- Quality long term jobs.
- More people will have confidence in Wrexham County Borough. As a place to live, work, learn, visit and spend money.
- More people will feel they belong in their neighbourhood and Wrexham County Borough.
- More people would have a reason to return.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Location

Wrexham is the largest town in North Wales. It is adjacent to the national boundary of England. To the east Flintshire and Denbighshire, to the south are the counties of Powys and Shropshire (Figure 2.1.1). The County Borough has a population of 134,844, with the town accommodating approximately 47,000. Wrexham is just 50 minutes' drive from major airports in Manchester and Liverpool and 90 minutes from Birmingham. It is well connected to most of the UK, through road and rail links, including train services direct to and from London. The Bidston railway corridor provides a sustainable link between Wrexham and Deeside and also provides connections to the Wirral and Liverpool. Wrexham General also provides a direct train link to Cardiff and Chester, with Chester Station linking to Manchester and London.

The applicant site is located within Wrexham Town Centre utilizing the existing units along Hope Street, Queen Street, Argyle Road and Rhosddu Road in Wrexham, North Wales (shown in Figure 2.1.2). This area has been highlighted for improvement as Key Site 4 within the Aspirational Town Centre Designation Wrexham Town Centre Master Plan.



Figure 2.1.1 - Regional Context

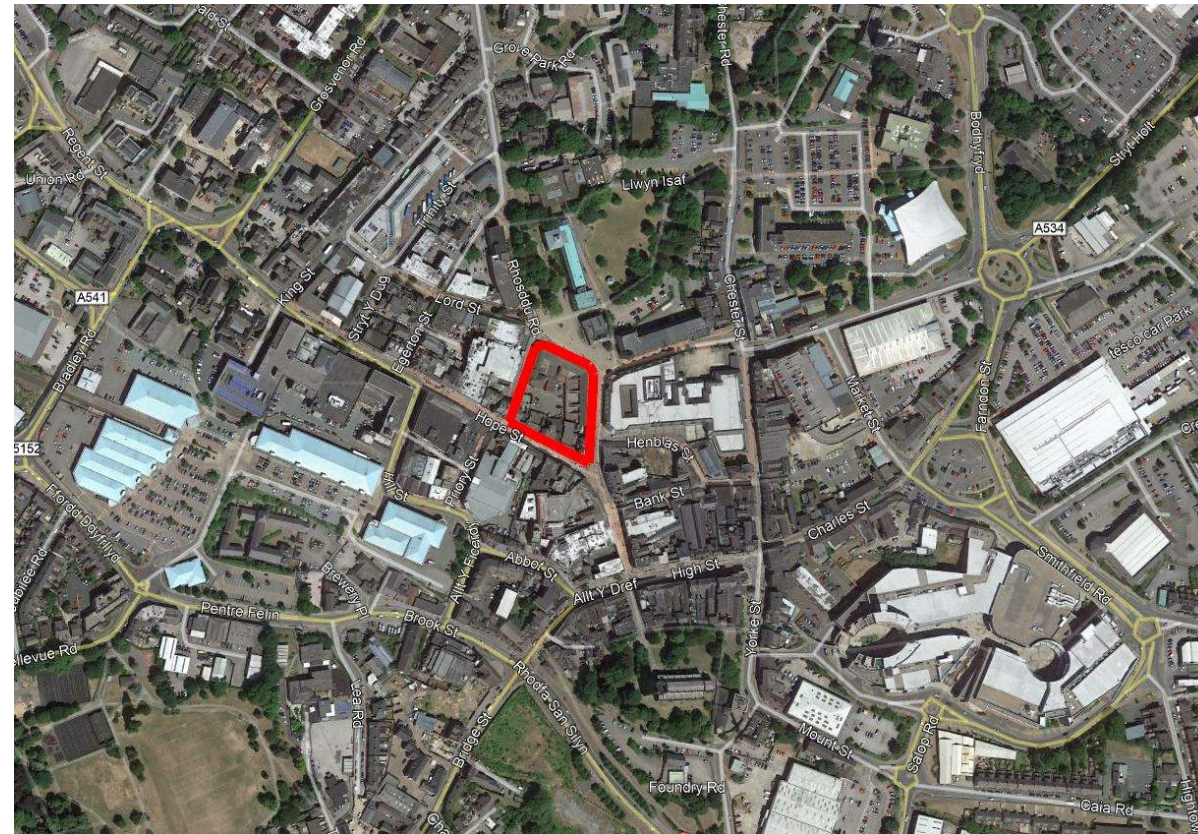


Figure 2.1.2 —Aerial view showing surrounding shopping complexes, main roads and green areas. Site outlined in red



Figure 2.1.3- Map showing position of applicant site in relation to the A483 and Wrexham Maelor Hospital. Site located/circled in red



Figure 2.1.4 - Applicant site highlighted in Red with Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre Highlighted in Blue. Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre less than 0.4 miles from site



Figure 2.1.5 - Wrexham Tourist Information Centre, less than 150m from site. Meadow Shopping Centre Highlighted in Blue. Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre less than 0.4 miles from site



Figure 2.1.6 —Corner of Hope Street and Queen Street, Principle shopping street and Conservation Area.



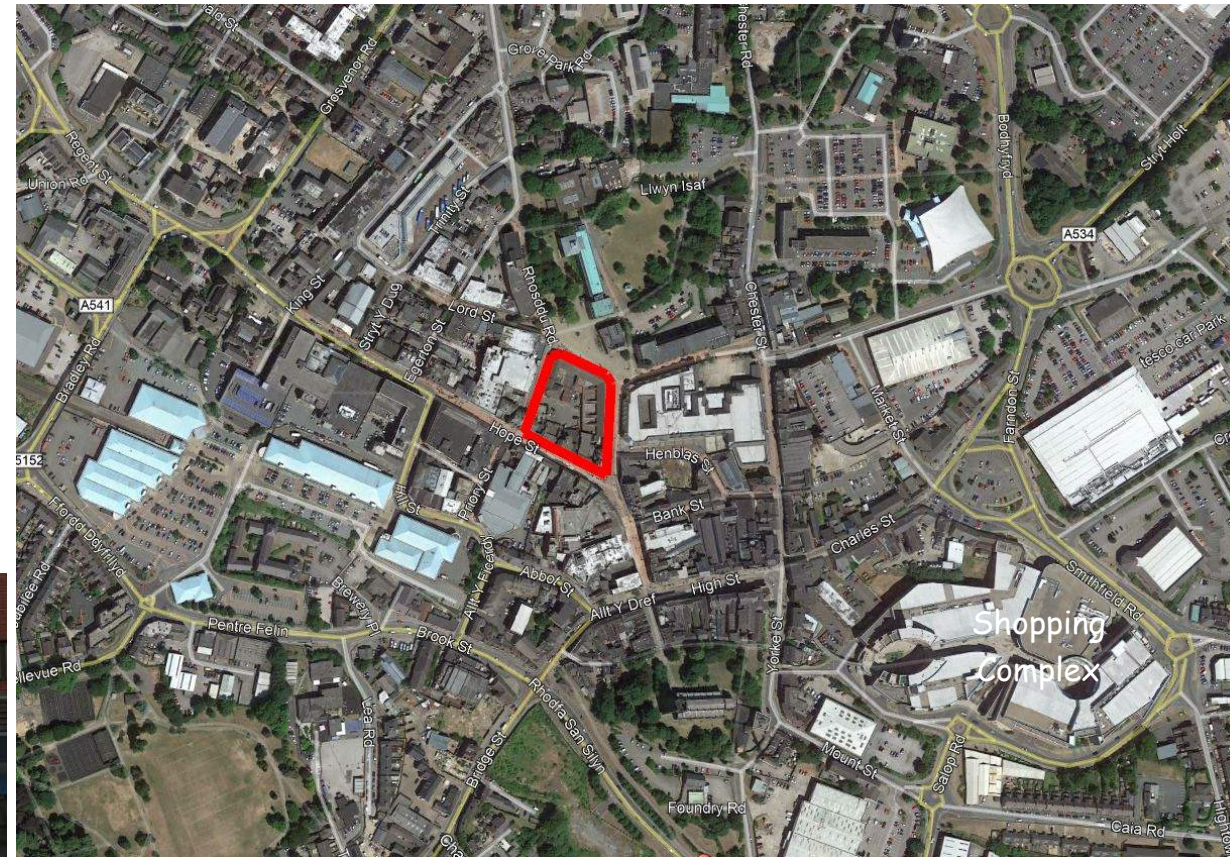
2.21- View Looking down Hope Street towards Queen Street.



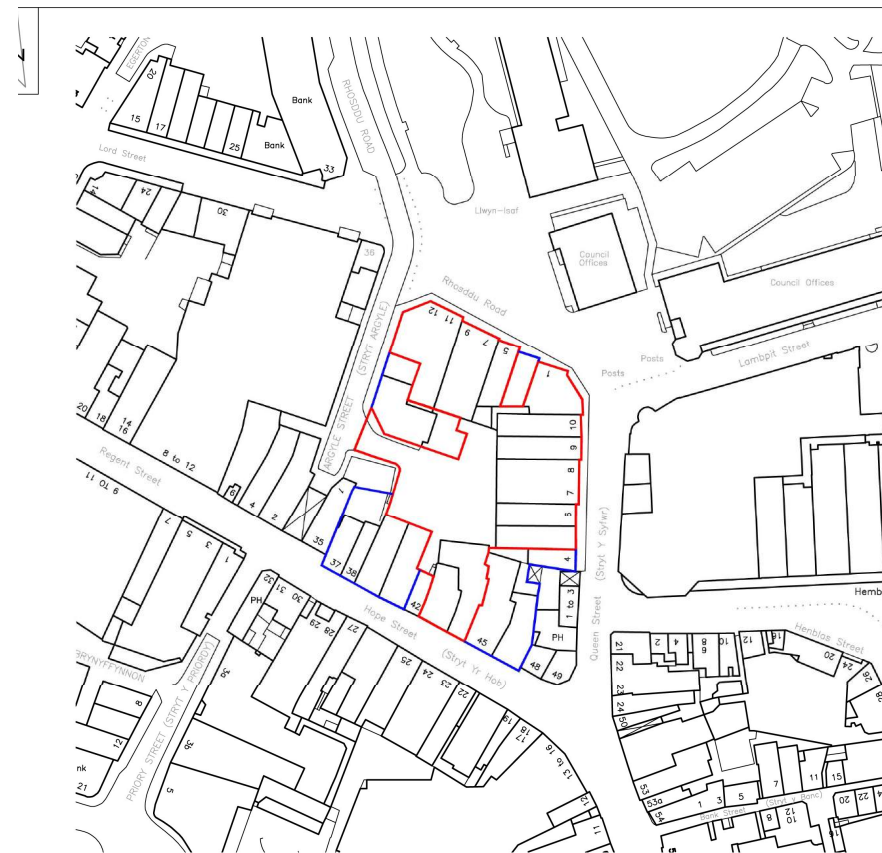
2.2.2- View Looking down Queen Street towards Hope street



2.2.3- View looking down towards Argyle Street from Queen Street



2.2.4—Site Location in red



2.2.5—Site Location in red

2.2 The Site

The 0.3ha site is predominantly taken up by the existing footprint of the units along Hope street, Queen Street and Rhosddu Road.

At the back of the existing buildings there is a service yard used for access and deliveries. The site is essentially flat with minor changes in levels between the existing units.

The existing buildings are located within the main area of Wrexham town centre with access from multiple existing transport links, making it a prime destination for local people.

Wrexham Town Centre is highlighted as the Historic Core on the Wrexham's Town Character area map within the Local Planning Guidance Note No.19.

It is also highlighted within the Wrexham Town Centre Conservation area that Hope Street is within the Conservation Area (shown in Section 2.4—Figure 2.4.1—Unitary Development Plan and Figure 2.4.2—Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area)

In the proposed design, this site would become a 'micro retailing' hub for Wrexham. This will include 'go-to' places to eat and drink and with the development of the court yard that can host year round events which will offer customers a new, cultural shopping and leisure experience giving them a reason for return visits.

The site benefits from good links to local infrastructure including, bus stops, food stores, local area of play, sports facilities, restaurants, libraries and public houses, all within walking distance.

The application site is easily accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and users of Wrexham's numerous bus and train services. It is anticipated that a fairly high proportion of visitors and staff will travel to the application site by these sustainable means, and in particular Wrexham central railway station and Wrexham Bus station which is a five minute walk away.

This is a prime location for commercial development and the proposals maximise the site to its full potential.

2.3 Context Analysis

The applicant site is located within the town centre of Wrexham. The built form around the site is now predominately commercial and residential.

The site benefits from good links to local infrastructure including, bus stops, food stores, local area of play, sports facilities, restaurants, libraries and public houses, all within walking distance.

The application site is easily accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and users of Wrexham's numerous bus and train services. There is a bus station located 0.2miles from the applicant site highlighted in the site plan opposite. The railway line is located to the West of the site and the nearest station is in the city centre to the site is 0.4miles.

The architectural style of the area is varied. The vast majority of the buildings have brickwork or rough cast rendered walls utilizing decorations such as brick pilasters, Dormers, Tuscan Columns, Ashlar Stone work, decorated fascia's, various brick bonds, Dutch gable, Fish scale slates, Gables, Jetty gables, mock timber work, polychromy, polygonal roof's and Terracotta signs.

The windows are predominantly white timber.

Hope street falls within a conservation area, as such the existing buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area must be retained.

The Grade 2 Listed buildings located along Hope street must retain their original character and style such as the Boots store which was built in 1904-1905 with the Talbot hotel on the first and second floors with shops on the ground floor. This is a prime example of a mock Tudor building with a polygonal roof.

Understanding the nature of the application site and the opportunities and constraints that it presents provides an important foundation upon which the proposed development has been established. This design and access statement sets out the analysis of the site and how it has been used to inform the design of the application proposals.

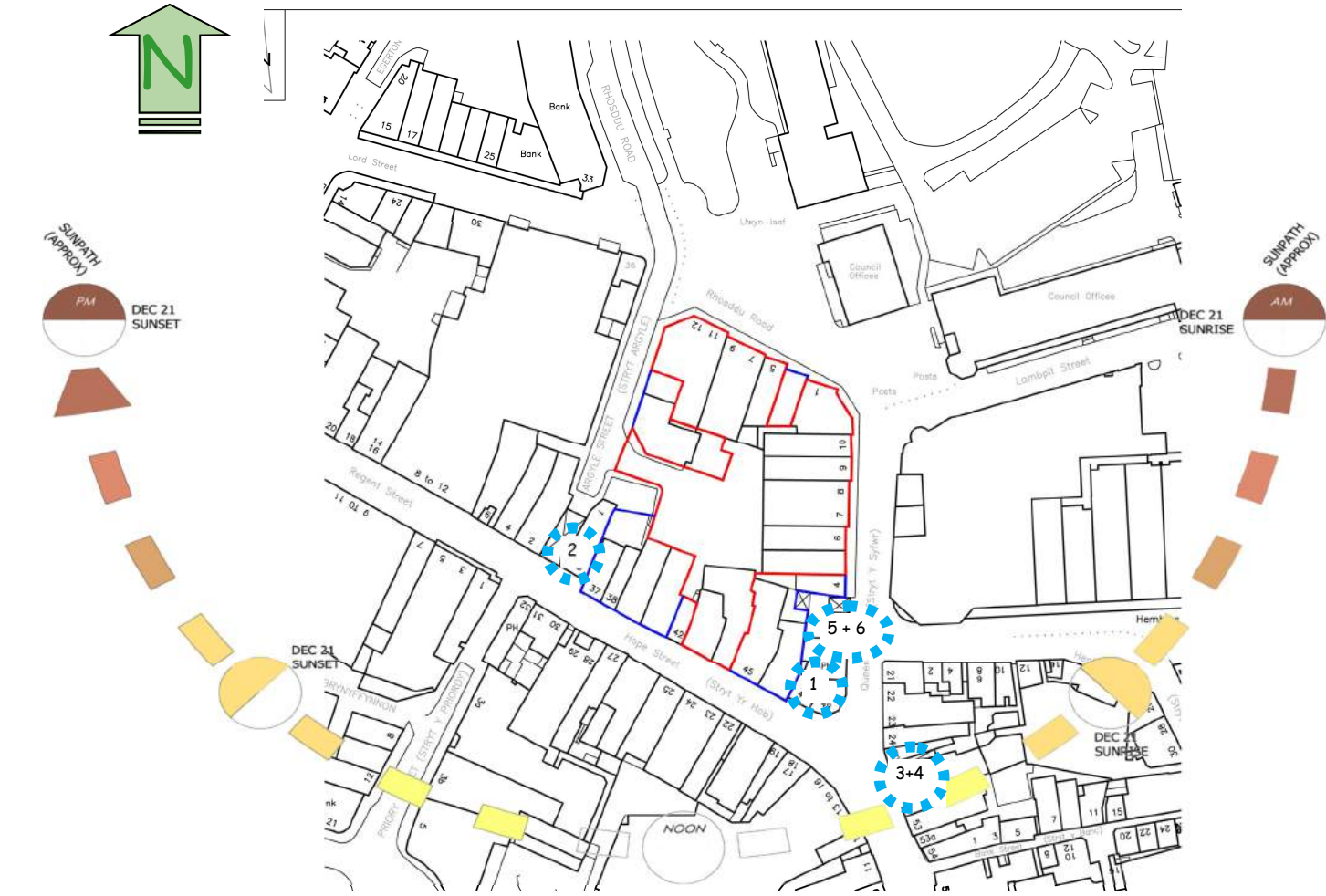


Figure 2.3.1—Sun Path analysis and Photograph location.



Figure 1—Polygonal Roof On Mock Tudor Grade 2 Listed Building. Talbot Inn, Queen Street.



Figure 2—Polychromy Brickwork on Westminster buildings/Argyle Archway, Hope Street.



Figure 3—Pilasters on Central Arcade entrance, Hope Street.



Figure 4—Dutch Gable on Central Arcade, Hope Street.



Figure 5—Gables located next to Talbot Inn, Queen Street.



Figure 6— Terracotta Entrance sign to Talbot Inn, Queen Street.

— Site Boundary
— Client Ownership

Figure location

2.4 Planning Policy

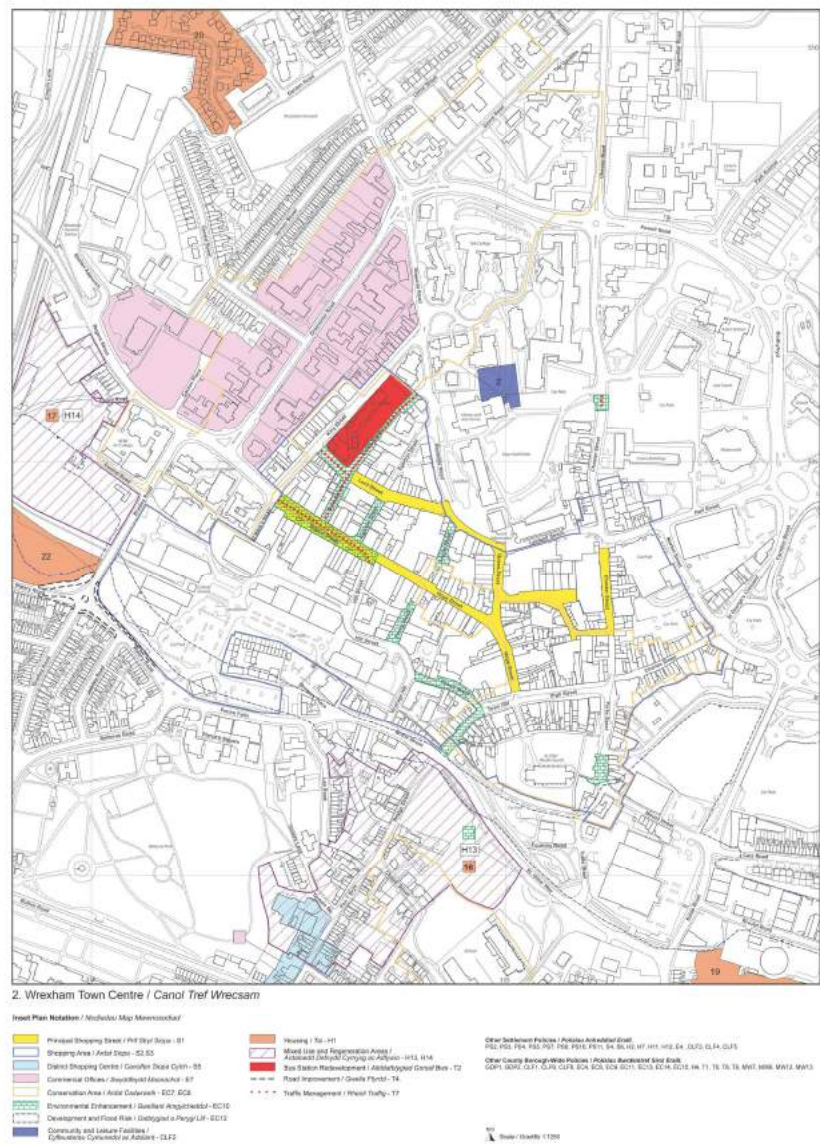


Fig 2.4.1—Unitary Development Plan .

Planning Policy Wales and TAN 12 Design

This Design and Access Statement [DAS] explains the approach to creating a sustainable development through good design in accordance with Planning Policy Wales and TAN 12. This goes beyond aesthetics to include the social, environmental, economic and other aspects of the development, as outlined in the Design Concept and Principles in section 4 of this Statement.

The application site is located within the town centre and will be providing employment, commercial, leisure, tourism, and infrastructure to the area in order to strengthen the towns regional function as a location of national importance. The proposed development will enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre by helping to provide a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy with a range of job opportunities enabling new and existing business to grow within Wrexham. The design will be of high-quality and sustainable, aiming to create local distinctiveness and character. It also aims to promote social inclusion, improve health and wellbeing and attract investment, business and visitors.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

Local Planning Guidance has been sought and taken from the Unitary Development Plan [see planning statement].

The principle Development Plan for the site remains the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan whose plan policies are currently being used for Development Control purposes. The Authority has embarked upon a replacement for the UDP in the shape of a Local Development Plan (LDP) which will cover the plan period 2013 to 2028, but the plan has not been through examination. In 2018 the LDP had been placed 'on Deposit' supported with a full suite of evidence base and draft policies and allocations. However, it remains a draft document and has not been the subject of a binding inspector's report [see submitted planning statement].

In consideration of the proposed development scheme the following local and national planning policies and guidance have been considered.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

- Policy PS1: New Development.
- Policy PS2: Impact on New Development.
- Policy PS4: Settlement and Character.
- Policy PS7: Shopping.
- Policy PS11: Biodiversity.
- Policy GDP1: Development Objectives.
- Policy EC6: Biodiversity Conservation.
- Policy EC7: Conservation Areas
- Policy E7: Commercial Offices
- Policy S1: Shopping Streets in Wrexham Town Centre.
- Policy S2: Outside the Principle Shopping Streets of Wrexham Town Centre.
- Policy S3: Non-Shopping Key Town Centre Uses.
- Policy S4: Large Scale Retail Development.
- Policy S6: Local Need Shopping.
- Policy T8: Parking.

Wrexham Supplementary Guidance

- Local Planning Guidance Note 1: Advertisements.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 4: Conservation Areas
- Local Planning Guidance Note 6: Access to and Use of Buildings.

- Local Planning Guidance Note 7: Landscape and Development.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 9: Hot Food Take-Aways.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 12: Shopfront Design and Security.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 15: Cycling.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 16: Parking Standards.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 19: Wrexham's Town Character Areas.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 21: Space Around Dwellings (in relation to amenity distances).
- Local Planning Guidance Note 24: Designing Out Crime.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 30: Design.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 32: Biodiversity and Development.

Wrexham Town Centre: Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan.

National Planning Guidance

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) (Wales) Regulations 2012 Planning Policy Wales [PPW] - Welsh Assembly Government [Edition 10 December 2018].

- PPW Technical Advice Note 4: Retail and Commercial Development.
- PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning [2009].
- PPW Technical Advice Note 7: Outdoor Advertisement Control.
- PPW Technical Advice Note 11: Noise [1997].
- PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design [2014].
- PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport [2007].
- PPW Technical Advice Note 20: Planning and the Welsh Language [2017].
- PPW Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development.
- PPW Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment.

Manual For Streets : Department for Transport / Communities and Local Government [2007].

Manual For Streets 2 : Department for Transport [2010].

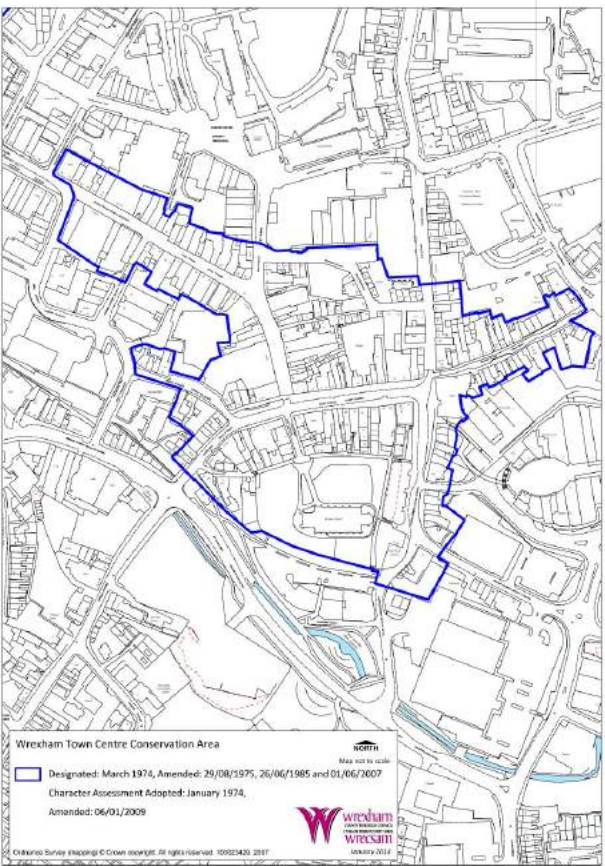


Figure 2.4.2—Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area.

2.4 Planning Policy



Examples of architectural styles in the local area along Hope Street, Argyle Street and Queens Street.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

Local Planning Guidance has been sought and taken from the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan [see Planning Statement]. Examples of relevant Policies that have informed the DAS are;

GDP1 - All new development should:-

- 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.
- Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
- Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
- 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.
- 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.
- Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.
- 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.
- Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.
- 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.
- Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Comment: All of the above general development objectives have been fully considered within the design process.

S1 - Non-retail proposals on ground floor frontages in the principal shopping streets of Chester Street (part); Henblas

Street; Hope Street; Lord Street (part); Queen Street; Regent Street (part); and Rhosddu Road (part), Wrexham will

not be permitted if they have a detrimental effect upon the character, vitality or viability of the area.

Comment: Within the proposal the principle shopping street along Hope Street will remain mostly unchanged in style, appearance and character to maintain the ground floor frontages.

S2 - Outside the principal shopping streets of Wrexham Town Centre, encouragement will be given to ground floor retailing proposals. Mixed use commercial development will be allowed only if it enhances the vitality and environmental quality of the area.

S3 - In order to sustain and enhance its vitality and viability, Wrexham Town Centre will be the preferred location for nonshopping uses, such as offices providing services to the public at large, and for major leisure uses. Proposals for such uses will be permitted firstly within the town centre where they are readily accessible to public transport facilities, followed by edge- of- centre locations, provided that they 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.

Comment: The application site proposes a mixed use of units within ranging from micro retailing and micro food courts on the ground floor with anticipated mixed units on first floor ranging from bar's, offices and studios. The design allows for flexibility, competition and choice by ensuring a range of unit sizes for different businesses and uses. They will be easily accessible and provided at a scale appropriate to the size and function required.

EC7 - Within, and in close proximity to, 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 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 materials of existing buildings.

Comment: It is considered that the minor alterations to the shopfront of 42/43 Hope Street will enhance the Wrexham Conservation Area. There is no demolition within the Conservation Area, nor will there be impact upon any enhancement scheme.

3. FACTORS AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Parking

There will be a service yard located behind the court yard area, this will be used for deliveries and potentially staff parking. The site currently has no provision for customer parking. There is car parking available close for customers to utilize that is within a short walking distance away. See Figure 3.1.1.

3.2 Existing Ground Conditions

The existing ground conditions appear to be healthy with limited evidence of damage to the existing buildings.

3.3 Archaeology

There is no archaeology remit on the site.

3.4 Existing Services

Subject to further investigation the existing services will be utilized wherever possible.

3.5 Grading of the site

The site is predominantly flat to look at. There is a slight gradient along Queen Street and Hope Street due to the natural lie of the land, this will not pose any issues during construction. The Court Yard area is also predominantly flat with a level difference between Hope Street and the court yard area. There are existing stairs located here to take the change in level which will be utilized within the proposed design.

3.6 Flood Risk

Flood risk has been checked on the NRW website (see Figure 3.6.1 for relevant flood map) and confirmed to not be within a flood zone.

4. DESIGN OBJECTIVES

4.1 The Brief

The development aims to attract national high street retailers back to the original end of town, but also attract smaller, perhaps more arty, independent, local businesses to create a 'micro retailing' hub for Wrexham. Along with 'go-to' places to eat and drink and the development of the court yard that can host year round events that will offer customers a new, cultural shopping and leisure experience giving them a reason for return visits.

Develop existing buildings to maximise the potential of the site whilst respecting the local vernacular and street scene. Re utilise the site as outlined in the UDP and produce a good mix of high quality units for a range of potential users.

Provide access without interfering with existing roadways.

Provide commercial units who will appreciate urban location and strong transport links that the site provides.

Provide a space that is welcoming, vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy with a range of job opportunity's to enable new and existing business to grow within Wrexham.

Attract new customers to the area that would have ordinarily shopped elsewhere.

To provide infrastructure to the area in order to strengthen the towns regional function as a settlement of national importance.

4.2 Pre Application Discussions

Prior to submitting this planning application, preapplication advice was assembled by Sharon Holman – Wrexham planning Case Officer Wrexham's Local Authority. The advice received has been acted upon and is reflected in this planning application.

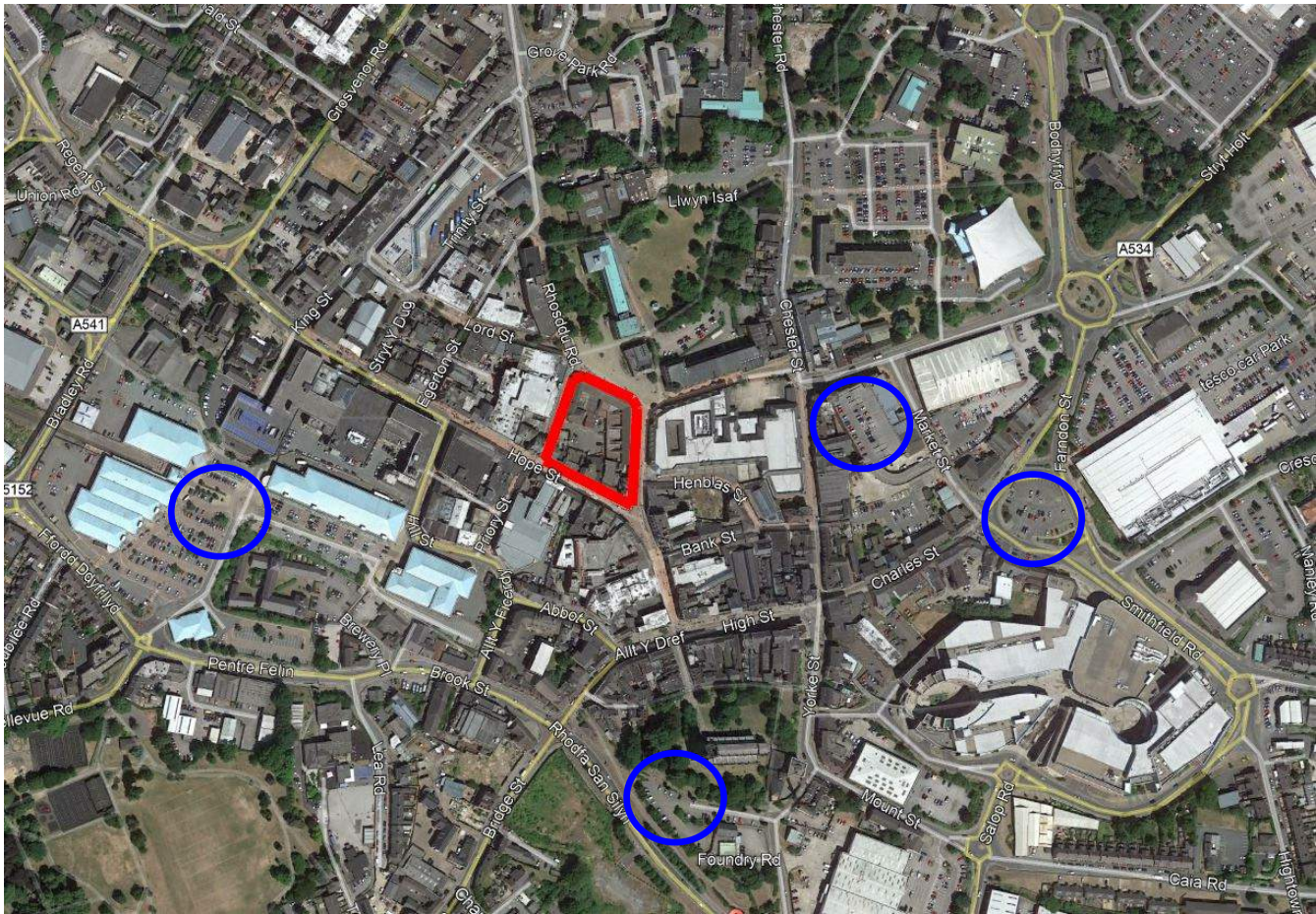


Figure 3.1.1 Ariel View - Existing Car Parking in relation to site.

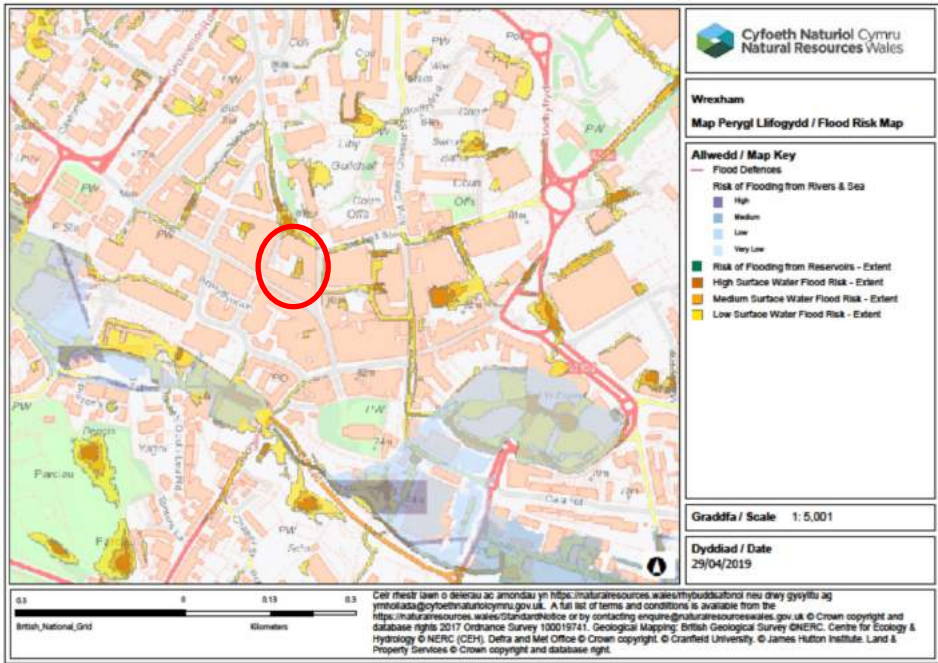


Figure 3.6.1 Flood Risk Map (Site Highlighted in Red)



Figure 4.3.1—Existing Infrastructure.
Existing travel routes shown Blue.



Figure 4.3.2—Improved Infrastructure.
Improved travel routes shown Green.



4.3 Design Concept & Principles

The main principles for this project were to attract national high street retailers back to the original end of town, but also attract smaller, perhaps more arty, independent, local businesses to create a 'micro retailing' hub for Wrexham. Along with 'go-to' places to eat and drink and the development of the court yard that can host year round events that will offer customers a new, cultural shopping and leisure experience giving them a reason for return visits. The design aims to construct a spacious, comfortable and aesthetically in keeping with the local design philosophy and not adversely affecting the look and feel of the area.

It was important to develop the existing buildings to maximise the potential of the site whilst respecting the local vernacular and street scene. Re utilise the site as outlined in the UDP and produce a good mix of high quality units for a range of potential users. The design aims to provide disabled access without interfering with existing roadways where possible.

The scheme aims at providing a space that is welcoming, vibrant, diverse and aims to provide a competitive local economy with a range of job opportunity's to enable new and existing business to grow within Wrexham. The scheme has been designed so that commercial units will appreciate urban location and strong transport links that the site provides.

The principal aim of the masterplan is to maximise connections back to the surrounding area while releasing an area of under-utilised town centre land for positive use. The court yard area shown green in Figure 4.3.3—Number 04, will be used to create an external open air court yard that will hold various year round events. This court yard will also provide the following linkages which will strengthen the infrastructure;

Hope Street Entrance

This runs between the court yard and Hope Street. The arcade is a critical element of the project because it creates a 'retail circuit' that facilitates a much better movement of people within the town centre, linking Hope Street, Rhosddu Road and Queen Street to the Court Yard area. Shown in Figure 4.3.3—Number 01.

Queen Street Entrance

This runs between the court yard and Queen Street. The arcade is a critical element of the project because it creates a 'retail circuit' that facilitates a much better movement of people within the town centre, linking Hope Street, Rhosddu Road and Queen Street to the Court Yard area. Shown in Figure 4.3.3—Number 02.

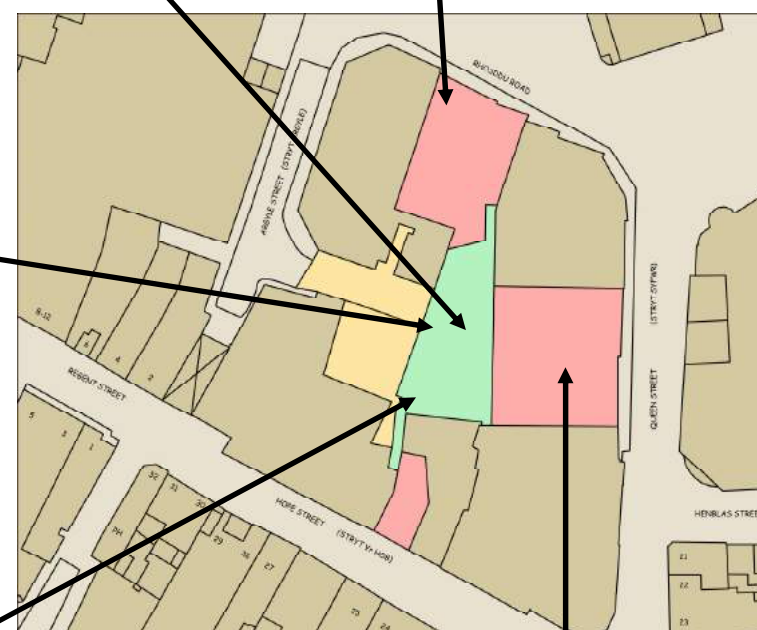
Rhosddu Road Entrance

This runs between the court yard and Rhosddu Road. The arcade is a critical element of the project because it creates a 'retail circuit' that facilitates a much better movement of people within the town centre, linking Hope Street, Rhosddu Road and Queen Street to the Court Yard area. Shown in Figure 4.3.3—Number 03.

The proposals reinforce the ambitions of the masterplan to create an improved pedestrian environment. One of the key design drivers has been the creation of a retail circuit—this is created through the use of the arcades linking Hope street, Rhosddu Road and Queen Street together. The initial proposals aim to meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion so that all potential users of Chapter Court, regardless of disability, age or gender can use them safely and easily. Improved pedestrian access shown in Figure 4.3.2.

The design also seeks to reinforce the public realm by creating active frontage wherever possible.

The idea of using gates to the entrances are proposed so that the scheme feels open even when the development isn't. These gates also provide a higher level of security. The main entrances have been designed so that they draw users into the development. The entrances have been formed in a 'hour glass' shape to entice users into the development.



4.3 Design Concept & Principles

The court yard has been designed to create a functional adaptable space that will draw people in.

Recent developments such as Camden market in London and the Custard factory in Birmingham have provided inspiration for this scheme; as examples of modern urban markets that have provided an uplift to town centres that were previously tired and underused.

Within the development there is a main stage located within the court yard that will be used for various events. The stage is located such that when you are walking along Queen street you would have a view of the stage through the micro retail units, enticing people to walk into the development.

A green wall will be located behind the stage area to provide a division between the back of house/ service area and the court yard.

Green walls make a breath-taking statement by creating alluring and inviting environments. They are equally as impressive in appearance as they are purveyors of good health; the plants in the walls work as a natural air-filtration system that building occupants can enjoy. Employees are greeted by a green lush environment while savouring the soothing effects of being around an abundance of foliage. The green wall will also reduce wall surface temperatures by as much as 50 degrees °F, resulting in significant energy savings and air conditioning costs. It will also provide noise reduction emitting from the court yard area.

There will be a gated entrance within the green wall to provide emergency vehicle access, along with additional means of escape from the site in the event of fire.

Within the courtyard there is a moveable food van that would operate within the courtyard area concealing the gated entrance within the green wall.

Various potted planting will be provided within the court yard that can be relocated to adapt the courtyard for various uses.

Both the micro retail and micro food court areas will be designed so that they are enticing and draw users into the development through the use of the 'internal streets' with views of the court yard from outside of the development i.e along Queen street and Rhosddu Road.

The internal spaces within the micro retail and micro food court will be designed for adaptation for future/specific requirements of the intended users.

On the first floor there will be various uses such as bars, restaurants, studio spaces and offices all of which have break out areas that link back into the court yard through the use of a walkway creating a fully accessible development.

5. CHARACTER

5.1 Layout

Chapter Court consists of three arcades linking to the central court yard area.

Hope Street Arcade links Hope Street to the Court yard area whilst providing micro retail units on the ground floor with Management on First and Second Floor. Proposed Link Shown in Figure 5.1.1

Queen Street Arcade uses the previously occupied units of CEX, GBC and Warren James to create a micro retail arcade linking Queen Street to the court yard area. Proposed Link Shown in Figure 5.1.2

Rhosddu Road Arcade uses the previously occupied units of Jeff Furniture and the Empty Retail unit next door. Utilizing these units to create a Micro Food Court area with links from Rhosddu Road and the Court Yard area. Proposed Link Shown in Figure 5.1.3

The First floor proposes the utilization of the upper floor for various uses such as Studio spaces, Bars/Restaurant's and Offices. Shown in Figure 5.1.4

Red area indicates the office, bars, restaurant / studio spaces with the breakout area shown in Green with the proposed balcony proposed in Blue.

The design solution integrates the development within its context and seeks to achieve the following:

1. Good Movement and access between Hope street, Rhosddu Road , Queen Street and the Court Yard.
2. Allow adequate light to all areas of the development.
3. Blend in with the context around it, whilst featuring an individual layout.

Please also see the next pages for the typical elevations demonstrating the frontage proposed for Hope Street, Queen Street and Rhosddu Road.

5.2 Scale

The scale of the application proposals has largely been determined through an analysis of their particular situation relative to the immediate and wider context.

The 0.3ha site is predominantly taken up by the existing footprint of the units along Hope street, Queen Street and Rhosddu Road.

In the proposed design, this site would become a 'micro retailing' hub for Wrexham. This will include 'go-to' places to eat and drink and with the development of the court yard that can host year round events which will offer customers a new, cultural shopping and leisure experience giving them a reason for return visits.

The Development is classed as a Minor Development due to the existing use classes on site and the proposed use classes do not increase the development size to be classed as a Major Application. This has been confirmed by Sharon Holman from Wrexham Planning Department.



Figure 5.1.1—Hope Street Arcade



Figure 5.1.2—Queen Street Arcade

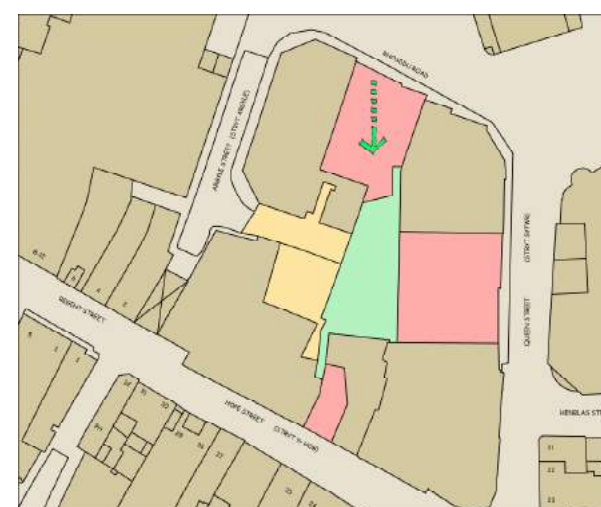


Figure 5.1.3—Rhosddu Road Arcade

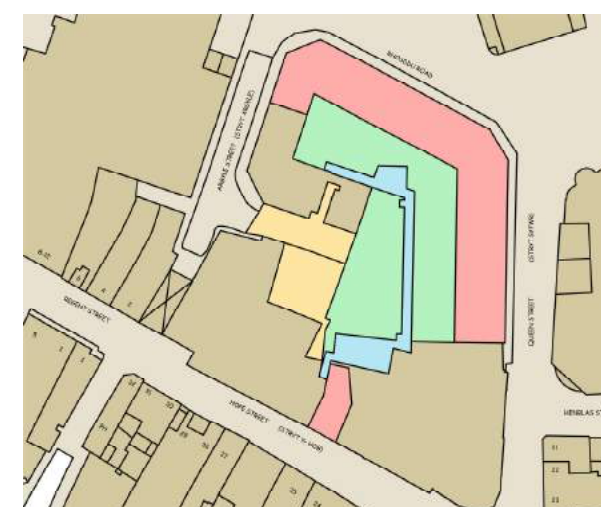


Figure 5.1.4—First Floor Bar/Restaurant/Studio space with breakout areas



Figure 5.1.5— Proposed Front Elevation Queen Street



Figure 5.1.6— Proposed Front Elevation Queen Street



Figure 5.1.7-Proposed Front Elevation Rhosddu Road



Figure 5.1.8-Proposed Front Elevation Rhosddu Road

5.3 Amount

The amount of development being provided are as follows—

Ground Floor

Micro Food Court Area is 380.6742

Micro Retail Court Area is 508.322

Court Yard Area is 412.223m³

Hope Street Arcade is 131.859m²

Electrical Sub Station is 47.369m²

Bin store/Service area is—125.188m²

First Floor

Hope Street Office Space is 89.808m²

Unit 1— 373.279m²

Unit 2— 61.368m²

Unit 3— 135.649m²

Unit 4— 123.020m²

Unit 5— 123.551m²

Unit 6— 124.485m²

Breakout area—818.831m²

Second Floor

Hope Street Office Space—89.808m².

5.4 External Spaces/Landscape

There is a very limited requirement for landscaping as part of the application proposals. The court yard area will be hard landscaped.

The external areas have been designed to create an informal and interesting environment, it avoids regular edge transitions and looks to invite movement.

The increased amount of tree and shrub planting would aid in the ability to reduce the impact of building development.

The structure planting would include a blend of native and non native species which would introduce variety into the site.

5.5 Demolition & Remedial Work

The construction of the new development will entail the demolition of the existing Electrical Sub station. This represents the only removal of existing accommodation proposed under this submission.

There are also internal reconfigurations to the units to maximise the internal spaces along with adjusting the existing entrance ways into Chapter Court along Hope Street, Queen Street and Rhosddu Road.

The demolition works will be carried out in accordance with the conditions set out in the planning permission.



Figure 5.1.9-Proposed Front Elevation Hope Street

5.6 Appearance & Materials

The aim is to create an innovative, well designed, aesthetically pleasing development.

The key factors influencing this design strategy have been the desire to create an attractive and secure public realm to enable community to maximise the use of the facilities.

The inherently eclectic mix of materials, building typologies, styles and architectural languages within Wrexham city centre generally, combined with the largely 'individual' character of many its buildings, offers the opportunity for the application proposals to be considered as a development that outwardly expresses the functionality of a new Micro food court and Micro retail court set behind the retained façades.

The main entrances along Hope Street, Queen Street and Rhosddu Road will have signage located above the entrance ways linking the three access routes into the court yard area together. The location of the building's signage is only suggested at this stage of the design's evolution - the precise location of any signage will be proposed at a later date, and will be the subject of a separate application to Wrexham Council.

The existing materials on the development are predominantly brickwork and various other materials; from rendering or painting of the existing brickwork, to utilizing clip-on brick slip systems have been considered. Due to the prominent town centre location it was determined that a low maintenance cost effective approach would be required. Therefore the most appropriate method to over clad would be to paint the existing brickwork.



Figure 5.6.1-Court Yard View towards stage area from rear of Hope Street



Figure 5.6.2-Court Yard View towards Micro Food Court



Figure 5.6.3-Court Yard View towards stage from Miro Retail Area



Figure 5.6.4-First Floor Court Yard View towards Micro Food Court



Figure 5.6.5-Court Yard View towards stage

6. ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY

6.1 Biodiversity

An Ecological survey has been undertaken on site and will be included within the planning application submission. The ecological survey highlights that there are no invasive or none native bat species have been recorded within the development zone. The development is considered to have a very low potential for use as bat roosts due to the construction details and materials currently present on site.

The ecological survey also highlights that the following have not been recorded on site;

- Great Crested Newt
- Badger
- Bats
- Birds
- Reptile
- Habitats (no floral species on site)

Precautionary measures during construction have been stated within the report as good construction practice.

In conclusion there are no major impacts on species or habitats identified during the assessment process. It is therefore the surveyor's opinion that the proposed development proposals are considered to have no long term impacts, the development therefore, will have no long term impact on the favourable conservation status of locally recorded protected species, or their ecological functionality if the works are carried out in accordance with the recommendations given within the report.

6.2 Energy Efficiency/Carbon

Richard Andrews Architects have considered a number of alternative technologies that are mostly standard practice and all up to date in line with relevant experience. Some measures proposed are as follows:

Reduction in CO2 Emissions

The design aims to achieve reductions in the Emission Rate and Building Emission Rates for its walls and roof, so that the external envelope performs to a high standard

Energy Efficient Lighting

Low energy light fittings will be used throughout the development where possible.

6.3 Climate Resilience

Over the next 50 years the climate is expected to change. Although we cannot be certain what these changes will be general trends have been predicted. The global mean temperature is expected to rise by between 1 and 3.5°C. In Britain this is expected to mean warmer summers and colder winters. We are also expected to have more extremes of weather, with greater risk of floods and droughts.

To ensure the development can cope with future changes the design will look at the current u-values across the site through the existing walls, floors and roofs and will be thermally upgraded to meet the new standards where necessary.

This means they will respond slowly to changes in external temperature.

The buildings will be designed to be as energy efficient as possible so as not to contribute further to climate change.

6.4 Sustainable Design Standards

The approach to sustainability on this project is to apply an 'Eco -minimalism' concept which focuses on 'getting the priorities right'.

We are implementing a coherent holistic strategy, which makes the form and materials of the building do the majority of the work of moderating the internal climate and only applying technology when needed.

Wherever possible the design will promote, specify and use locally sourced materials which have a commitment to sustainability and the environment.

The following are some of the measures proposed to be incorporated in the design of the scheme:-

- Natural Ventilation
- Control of solar gains
- Rainwater Harvesting

6.5 Sustainable Materials

Environmentally responsible methods of construction and a palette of sustainable, locally sourced materials have been chosen wherever possible, in pursuing a design that is both energy efficient and environmentally conscious.

The Design Team have selected a range of materials and systems, for both the building fabric and external works, that are rated highly in the BRE Green Guide.

Taking a practical approach to sustainability, there are some areas where lesser rated materials have been selected due either to design constraints or other overriding requirements e.g. robustness or low maintenance periods.

Internally materials are selected for their robustness and low maintenance.

Externally the existing buildings are brick clad. These are retained and painted where necessary. This is continued throughout development, bringing a consistency and quality to the finishes.

The design where possible aims to;

- Minimise waste in demolition and site clearance/ re-use materials where viable
- Integrate material considerations into all components of building systems to achieve low-energy design, indoor environmental quality, and optimization of daylighting
- Infiltration/capture of rainwater, operation and maintenance, etc and to limit pollution
- Endeavour to select materials, which have a low environmental impact in terms of extraction, manufacture, use and disposal
- Exercise care in selection of insulation and refrigeration materials so as not to contribute to ozone depletion
- Select locally extracted and manufactured materials where possible
- Select materials non-toxic to humans, such as can be found in carpets, floor sheeting, paints, sealants, fabrics
- Exercise care in selection of laminated or composite timber products, which may have formaldehyde content in adhesives

- Use recyclable materials where possible, e.g. carpets, aluminium, roof membrane, etc
- Select permeable paving materials, where practical Oblige the contractor to procure all timber from Forestry Stewardship Council certified sources Natural and self finishing materials are used in preference to applied finishes
- Avoid the use of PVC for floor coverings, cables or other widely used elements of the building
- Work to the local Environmental Health requirements in terms of noise pollution and vibration from the site as a whole

6.6 Water

Sustainable Approach

In order for the development to utilise as little water as possible, certain features have been included in the specification.

Water efficiency within the WC's will be implemented through the installation of low water use sanitary fittings and hand washing appliances including dual flush toilets and aerated taps.

Drainage

To employ a sustainable approach to water in terms of drainage, foul and surface water will discharge into existing public sewers.

6.7 Waste Management

Consultation has been sought with Wrexham Council, Waste Management for the provision of waste and recycling collection at the site. The level of waste has been assessed and an appropriately sized bin store has been provided.

Details of the bin store provision are as indicated on drawing R362-05-A1. It is suggested that further consultation be sought to ascertain recyclable facilities requirements on site.

7. ACCESS

7.1 Approach to Accessibility

At present access to the existing buildings for people with mobility difficulties or sensory impairment is reasonably satisfactory. The buildings have the benefit of being on a reasonably level site. This philosophy will be maintained and improved through the design development.

All areas of the development will be accessible for users with mobility difficulties or sensory impairment. It is intended that circulation areas will be designed to ensure unobstructed access. Clear lines of sight maximise the accessibility throughout the development. This reduces confusion and dependence on signage.

All circulation routes will be splayed or radius corners wherever possible.

Internal doors will maximise accessibility without compromising privacy, safety or security. Each door will provide at least the minimum effective clear door opening appropriate to the width and direction of approach.

Wherever possible we propose that the doors will;

- Not project into an access route
- Include manifestation if glazed
- Have at least 300mm alongside the leading edge of all doors to enable wheelchair users to open the door.
- Be light enough to be used by disabled people with limited mobility or strength.

Stairs within the development will where ever possible within the constraints of the design be;

- well lit
- Have a tactile surface to indicate the beginning and end of the flight.
- For safety, be designed to be of a consistent width have unobstructed landings at the head, foot and between flights with a depth at least equal to the width of the flight.

- Have no more than 12 risers and uniform risers and treads in consecutive flights.
- Have slip resistant treads
- Have visually contrasting nosing across the full width of the step.

Areas under the stairs should either have guarding or be closed off to avoid anyone colliding with the underside.

Escape Stairs will be designed to the same standard as general access stairs, in order that they are suitable for use by ambulant disabled people and blind/partially-sighted people in an evacuation.

Handrails for stairs will be at a height of at least 900mm (1000mm at landings) on both sides running the entire length to enable those with a weakness on one side to use them.

There is a lift located within the building this will be;

- Be located adjacent to other means of vertical circulation.
- Accommodate the expected people flow
- Have a clear landing directly in front of the lift of at least 1500mm for manoeuvring and waiting

Additional consideration will be given to the material finish of the lift and how this will be affected by the weather (including considerations of slip resistance, comfort and safety in use).

The toilet provisions where provided, will be designed to BS8300: 2009 and the requirements of Part M3 of the Building Regulations.

Fully accessible toilet / showers are designed to address the requirements of people with a variety of impairments. These spaces will be fully equipped for use by disabled people.

The standard dimensions to provide adequate manoeuvring and transfer space for disabled people are;

- Unisex accessible corner WC layout 2200mm x 1500mm min.
- Accessible WC compartment for ambulant disabled people 800mm x 1500mm
- Disabled people should be able to find and use suitable toilet accommodation as easily as non-disabled people. The location of the toilet, basin and other accessories in relation to the space required for manoeuvring, is critical in enabling disabled people to use various transfer techniques that allow independent or assisted use of sanitary facilities.

Wheelchair users and other users of an accessible toilet often move more slowly than non-disabled people. Facilities therefore will be provided within a reasonable travel distance from anywhere on a given floor plate to ensure that disabled people have access to the facility via the shortest available direct route.

These spaces will be located together with, and have a similar finish to standard toilet and/or shower provision, and comply with the following requirements:

- Accessible, well-lit and clearly-signed
- Have fixtures and equipment that is operable by people with poor dexterity or limited strength (operable with one hand)
- Have good visual contrast between the main features, equipment and controls inside a cubicle
- Not have timed lighting systems
- Door handles to be easy grip D handles and located on the back of doors
- Have clothes hooks sited at 1050mm and 1400mm high
- Have heating pipes and heating equipment carefully located and fitted with thermostatic controls.
- Be fitted with an alarm and reset button that is linked to the alarm system

Signage should be clear, concise and consistent, and suitable for people with visual impairments and learning disabilities, such as dyslexia. We have developed the planning of the building to be simple and intuitive as the ability to navigate independently around a building is dependent upon the basic building layout. We propose that any signage should be grounded in the following:

- Internal signage to be provided in public as well as back of house areas
- Easy to see (visual contrast with surroundings), with low glare, and easy to understand (is written concisely and in plain English)
- Rules for clear print are followed (contrast between text and background colours, large enough text and easy-to-read fonts)
- Simple illustrations or pictograms and symbols should be incorporated whenever possible
- All directional signs to and within the premises incorporate directional arrows
- The height of signage should be carefully considered to accommodate people of varying stature, as well as maintaining visibility should crowds obstruct lower positioned signage.
- Signs are well lit with their own source of light
- Tactile signage to be provided where it will benefit users

BS 8300: 2001 indicates that universally recognised symbols should be used to replace text, as an essential aid for people with learning difficulties. Where other types of pictograms and symbols are used these should be supplemented by text, and not used in isolation.

Clear signage and wayfinding for people unable to use stairs without assistance, one or more refuge points must be provided on each level offering a place of relative safety until assistance arrives.

- A two way communication device will be provided at all refuge points
- The size and number of refuges to be relative to the numbers of expected disabled people within a particular building or facility

8. MOVEMENT

8.1 Integrations / Connections

The development is located within the town centre and has various parking locations available relatively close to development.

The Bus station is also in close proximity to the site providing access to the site within 0.2miles from the bus station.

8.2 Transport Modes

The site benefits from good links to local infrastructure including, bus stops, food stores, local area of play, sports facilities, restaurants, libraries and public houses, all within walking distance.

The application site is easily accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and users of Wrexham's numerous bus and train services. It is anticipated that a fairly high proportion of visitors and staff will travel to the application site by these sustainable means, and in particular Wrexham central railway station and Wrexham Bus station which is a five minute walk away. Shown in figure 8.2.1

9. COMMUNITY SAFETY

9.1 Secure By Design ("SBD")

The design promotes SBD in placing gated entrances to the entrances to allow views onto the court yard area.

Visuals from windows to the court yard area provide good natural surveillance.

9.2 Boundary Treatments

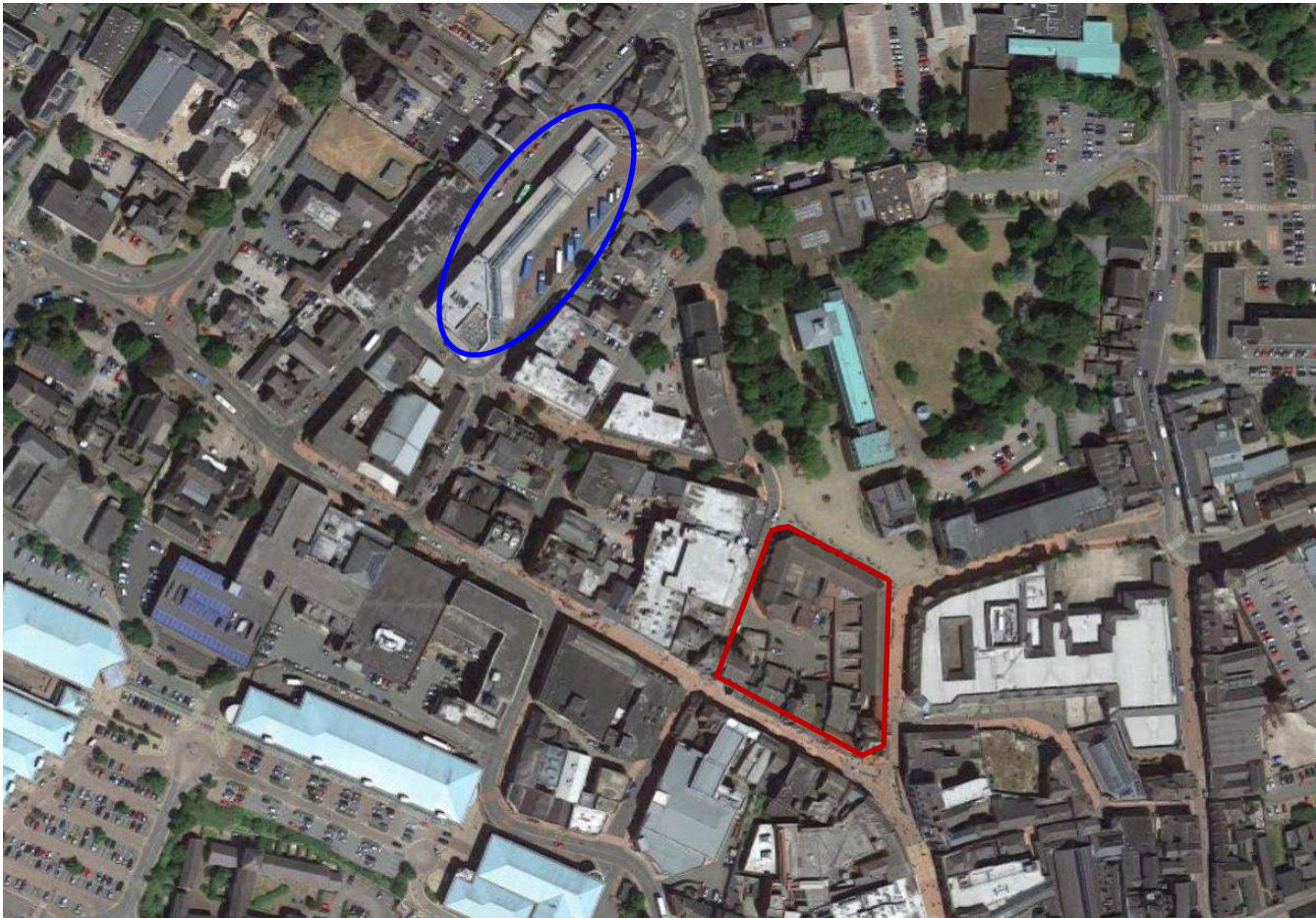
The courtyard is confined on three sides by the existing buildings creating the boundary's around the site with a green wall as shown in the graphics to split the existing court yard area into a service yard area and proposed court yard .

Existing boundary conditions will be maintained where applicable.

Please see planning drawings.

9.3 Surveillance

Natural surveillance is provided to all of the site by the orientation of the units facing onto the court yard area. The design also provides good views over Queen Street and Rhosddu Road contributing to a safer community.



8.2.1— Main Bus station shown in blue and Site highlighted in red.

10 CONSULTATION & CONCLUSION

10.1 Consultation/Conclusion

To conclude this document, every effort has been made to make the proposed development blend in the existing surroundings and street scene whilst still maintaining a level of individuality.

Environmental needs have been considered in terms of sustainable features, energy efficiency, layout and transport with a clear commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

This statement also demonstrates that the project is fully in line with national and local planning policy, and the supporting documentation demonstrates the technical acceptability of the scheme.

From its inception a consistent theme throughout the Chapter Court project has been that it must serve the needs and meet the aspirations of the people of the town as part of the wider masterplan for the regeneration of the town centre.

It is Wrexham's Council's belief, together with that of its consultant team, that the proposals contained in the application and explained in this Planning, Design and Access Statement provide an exciting vision for the redevelopment of the town centre, derived through a robust and inclusive process. The proposals will make a positive contribution to the town centre and help to bring a new level of vibrancy and activity to the town.

