Planning Statement

Change of Use from Vacant Office to Beauty (Hair, Lashes, Nails) and Training Use

Site and Existing Use

The application relates to a Grade II listed building located within Wrexham city centre in Wrexham. The premises were formerly used as office accommodation.

The site has been fully marketed over the years by BA Commercial and whilst there has been limited interest no offers have been received.

The last use was as an administration office for a local charity. The premises has not been altered and offers a variety of room sizes along with stair access to upper floors and kitchen area.

Proposed Development

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the premises to a mixed beauty and training use comprising:

- Hair services
- Lashes and beauty treatments
- Nail services
- Associated training use related to the business

No internal or external alterations are proposed as part of this application. As such no listed building application is being made

As no works to the listed building are proposed, the application will relate solely to a change of use.

The types of services offered will included the provision of nail, hair and lashes treatments by professional staff. The individual areas of expertise will operate from separate rooms within the building. An area for training of staff has also been designated.

The proposed use is considered to be in keeping with the town centre function with no detrimental impacts caused to neighbouring aspects of acknowledged importance.

Heritage Considerations

The building is Grade II listed and the proposal has been carefully considered to ensure the character, appearance and significance of the heritage asset are preserved.

Importantly:

- No extensions are proposed
- No alterations to the external appearance are proposed
- No changes to the historic layout or fabric are proposed internally
- Existing architectural and historic features will remain unaffected

As the proposal involves only a change of use with no physical alterations, the significance and setting of the listed building will be fully preserved.

The proposed use will also provide a viable and sustainable occupation for the property, helping to secure its ongoing maintenance and long-term preservation of the listed building through active use.

Vacancy and Economic Benefits

The premises have been vacant for over three years and the proposal will bring the building back into beneficial use within Wrexham city centre.

The development will:

- Prevent further deterioration associated with long-term vacancy
- Support the vitality and viability of Wrexham city centre
- Increase footfall and activity within the area
- Support local employment opportunities
- Provide vocational training opportunities within the beauty sector
- Encourage ongoing investment in the maintenance and upkeep of the listed building

The proposal represents an appropriate town centre use which will contribute positively to the local economy and wider regeneration objectives.

Impact on Amenity

The proposed use is compatible with surrounding commercial and town centre uses and is not expected to result in unacceptable impacts in relation to:

- Noise and disturbance
- Traffic generation
- Residential amenity
- Hours of operation

As no operational development or structural alterations are proposed, impacts on neighbouring occupiers will be minimal.

The proposal secures the beneficial re-use of a vacant listed building without harm to its historic significance.

Additional Welsh Government Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

The proposal is also supported by the following Welsh Government Technical Advice Notes, which are material considerations in the determination of planning applications in Wales.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment

Welsh Government Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment provides guidance on the consideration of heritage assets within the planning system, including listed buildings. TAN 24 confirms that the historic environment should be protected whilst allowing heritage assets to remain in viable and sustainable use.

The proposal accords with TAN 24 because:

- No internal or external alterations are proposed
- The special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building will be preserved
- The proposal secures the continued viable use of a vacant heritage asset
- The character, appearance and setting of the building will remain unaffected

The proposed change of use therefore represents an appropriate and sensitive form of development consistent with the objectives of TAN 24.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4: Retail and Commercial Development

TAN 4 promotes the vitality, attractiveness and diversity of town and city centres and supports appropriate commercial uses within sustainable centre locations.

The proposed hair, beauty and training use will contribute positively to the vitality and economic activity of Wrexham city centre by:

- Bringing a long-vacant premises back into active use
- Increasing footfall within the city centre
- Supporting local services and employment opportunities
- Providing a complementary commercial use within the established centre

The proposal is therefore consistent with the objectives of TAN 4.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development

TAN 23 recognises the importance of supporting economic development alongside social and environmental considerations within the planning system.

The proposal supports the objectives of TAN 23 through:

- Reoccupation of a vacant commercial premises
- Support for small business growth
- Provision of local employment opportunities
- Delivery of vocational training opportunities within the beauty sector

- Contribution to the wider economic vitality of Wrexham city centre

The proposal therefore represents sustainable economic development in accordance with national planning guidance.

Local Planning Policy Context

Development Plan Status

The current statutory development plan for Wrexham comprises:

- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
- The adopted Wrexham County Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996–2011

The former Local Development Plan 2013–2028 is no longer adopted policy.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996–2011

The proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the adopted UDP, including the following:

Policy GDP1 – General Development Principles

The proposal complies with the general principles of sustainable development by:

- Bringing a long-term vacant property back into beneficial use
- Supporting the vitality and viability of Wrexham city centre
- Ensuring no unacceptable impact upon neighbouring occupiers
- Preserving the character and appearance of the listed building
- Making effective use of an existing previously developed building within a sustainable location

The proposal is considered appropriate in scale and nature for the city centre setting.

Policy S4 – Retail and Commercial Development in Wrexham Town Centre

The proposal supports the continued vitality and diversity of Wrexham city centre through the introduction of an active commercial service use within an existing vacant premises.

The proposed hair, beauty and training use will increase activity and footfall within the centre and contribute positively to the local economy.

Policy EC9 – Listed Buildings

Policy EC9 states:

“Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.”

The proposal fully accords with Policy EC9 because:

- No internal or external alterations are proposed
- The historic fabric and layout of the building will remain unaffected
- The character, appearance and significance of the Grade II listed building will be preserved
- The proposal secures a viable ongoing use for a heritage asset currently vacant for over three years

The UDP further recognises the importance of establishing “appropriate new uses” for listed buildings to secure their long-term survival.

Overall Policy Compliance

Having regard to:

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12)
- Future Wales – The National Plan 2040
- Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996–2011
- TAN 4: Retail and Commercial Development
- TAN 23: Economic Development
- TAN 24: The Historic Environment

the proposal is considered to represent an appropriate, sustainable and policy-compliant re-use of a long-vacant Grade II listed building within Wrexham city centre.

Conclusion

The proposal represents an appropriate and sensitive re-use of a long-vacant Grade II listed building within Wrexham city centre.

The development:

- Preserves the character and significance of the listed building
- Introduces no physical alterations to the property
- Brings a vacant building back into active use
- Supports city centre vitality and economic activity
- Provides employment and training opportunities

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in both planning and heritage terms and should be supported.