41 Foster Road Wrexham LL11 2LT

T: 07833 029535
E: info@cbarchitecturaldesign.co.uk
W: www.cbarchitecturaldesign.co.uk

Architectural Design

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HERITAGE IMPACT & DESIGN STATEMENT
for proposed works at:
31 High Street, Wrexham LL13 8HY



Background, History & Description of the Asset.

The building was listed on 31/01/1994 as Grade II. The reason for listing being it forms part of an important group of commercial buildings on High Street.
Local Historian AN Palmer first noted a building on this site by 1750, but the present building was rebuilt with the Overton Arcade in 1868. It was probably originally intended as a shop with accommodation above, and was previously used as offices with the building now being vacant.
During the 1980s the building was occupied by a branch of the Bank of Wales and the last occupant was Thomas Andrews and Partners Solicitors. The quaint and often overlooked Overton Arcade contains some small shop units and a restaurant and links High Street with Temple Row.
The exterior is brick with painted stone dressings, used slate roof. 3 storeys, 4 window range, incorporating passage entrance to Overton Arcade to the left. Inserted ground floor frontage, the upper windows are 2-pane sashes in stressed architraves with foliate keystones. Continuous sill band to second storey carried on moulded brackets. Moulded string course over second floor then projecting eaves cornice. Stressed angle quoins. End wall stacks (rebuilt).

Introduction

This statement provides written background information which is to be read in conjunction with the drawings which show details of the proposed alterations.
This statement has been prepared by CB Architectural Design to accompany a planning application for this new development at 31 High Street Wrexham.

Accessibility

Accessibility is unaltered and both front and side entrances provide level access to the building. The property is located in High Street Wrexham town centre with bus stops nearby and within easy walking distance of the bus station and Central & General railway stations. Additionally, there is significant public car parking provision in close proximity to the site.
Commercial accommodation is retained at ground floor level, with ancillary space only in the basement and it is anticipated to have limited staff numbers.
Benefitting from transport links it is not intended that parking be provided in association with the new residential accommodation.
Existing access is retained to the main entrance on High Street to private facilities within the office accommodation. The new residential units to the upper floor are accessible the existing rear staircase only. The ground floor is also accessible from the rear entrance forming a fire escape.

Environmental Sustainability

Whilst the proposals are not detrimental to environmental sustainability, the development and nature of the premises offer little opportunity to effect any significant improvement. Insulation to the roofspace will be installed if not already present and new lighting fittings of improved efficacy will be installed. Double glazed removable secondary glazing units are proposed to all windows including the front elevation visible from High Street. Continued use of well-maintained building stock does itself achieve an important degree of sustainability and manages further deterioration.

Character

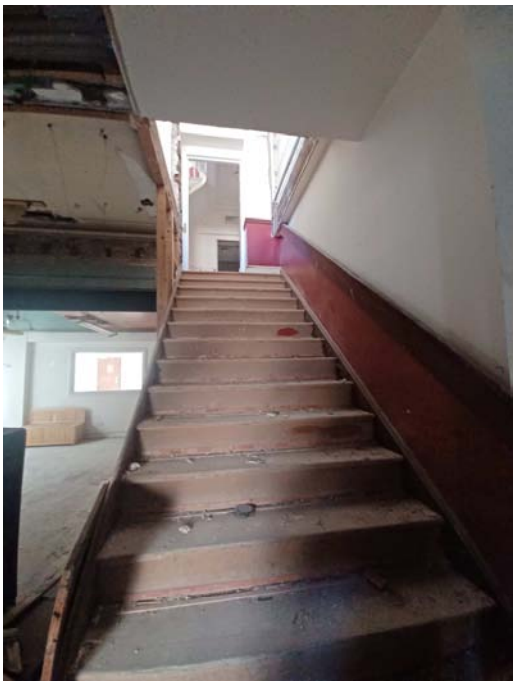
None of the proposed works will adversely affect the fabric or appearance of the building. The external aesthetics to High Street will be retained.

Internally to the ground floor a suspended false ceiling has been introduced. Upon removal this revealed the existing simple Victorian swan neck plaster coving to the rooms perimeter and the structural beams. Please see below;



To the ground floor it is proposed a new suspended ceiling is provided to preserve the existing features and also provide an opportunity to introduce a breathable insulation roll to provide both thermal, acoustic & fire rating benefits. It would also be possible to run new services within it i.e. electrical cables etc.

It is proposed to remove the modern staircase that has been introduced from the main shop area accessing the first floor;



Doing so will reintroduce the original layout and also remove the unsightly modern bulkhead to the first floor (Unit 2 Bed 1). The remnants of the bulkhead as removed under the previous approval can be seen below;



To the front of the property modern skirting has been introduced at some point with chamfered & bevelled profiles. It is proposed to introduce new skirting matching those of the original skirting to the upper floors.
To the rear of the ground floor there is no coving present and modern skirting as outlined above.

To the upper floors the original skirting remains to the perimeter of the building and later installed modern partitions feature bevelled profiles. As the modern partitions are to be removed it will provide an opportunity to install new skirting to new partitions matching the existing skirting to the perimeter. The existing skirting is to be retained and repaired as necessary to maintain the character of the building. To the upper floors a simple Victorian swan neck coving remains which is to be retained. A new suspended ceiling is to be provided as described above.

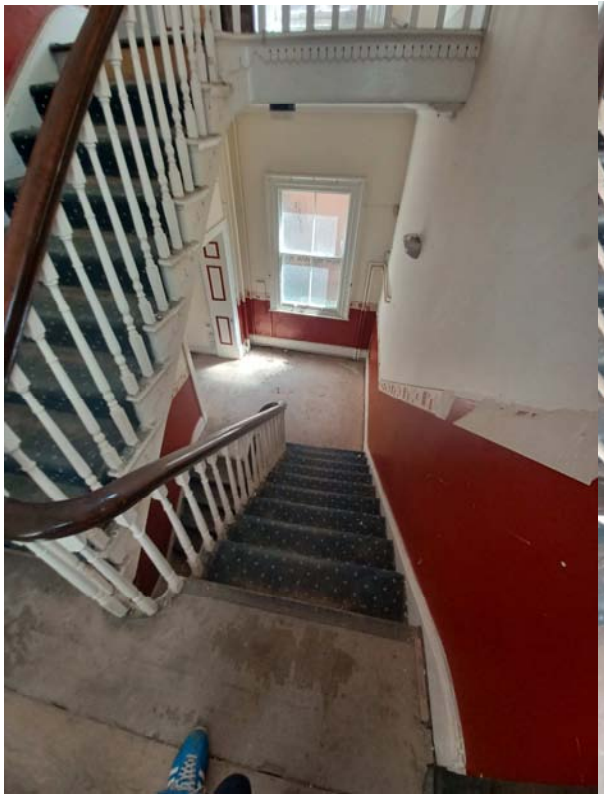
The majority of the architectural features pertain to the central staircase rising from first floor up to the second. The original Victorian Ogee skirting remains along with a simple plain roll coving, all of which are to be retained and repaired as necessary. The existing sash window architrave surrounds & cills remain providing excellent natural light and are an important feature. The original architrave and reveals to the openings adjacent the new lobbies to Units 2, 3, 4 & 5 remain and the new partitions for the lobbies will be set away from them to preserve their architectural merit.

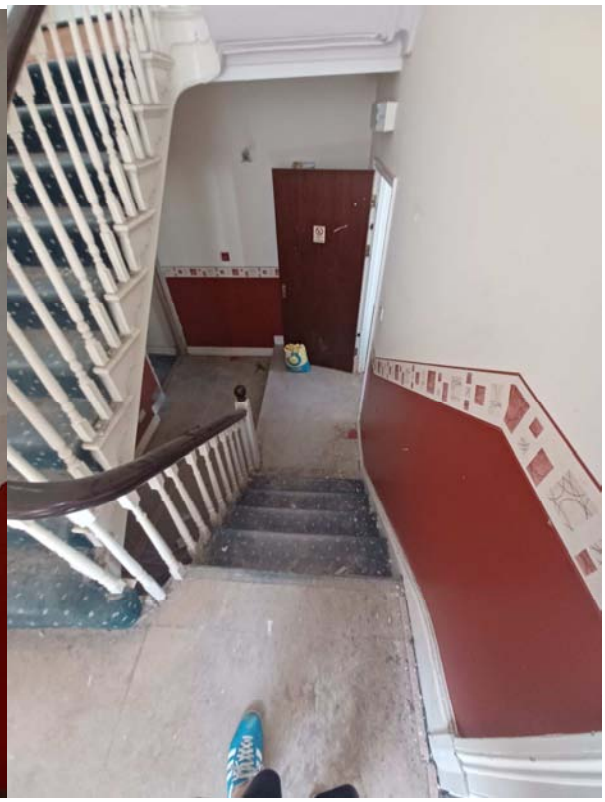


The timber staircase comprises painted timber balustrades with moulded timber handrail over which curves elegantly on returns. The underside of the stairs are plastered with deep Victorian plaster coving and the landing trimmers feature a decorative timber dentil course. All remain in excellent condition and other than redecoration little work is anticipated.









The ground floor has been covered in 6mm plyboard which when lifted reveals original parquet blocks. The plyboard is to be carefully removed and the parquet flooring cleaned and if required sanded and coated with a penetrating wax or oil to preserve and enhance their appearance.

The original floorboards to the upper floors and landing have been covered with 6mm plyboard and it is unclear if this has been nailed or glued down. It is proposed that these are carefully removed throughout so as to improve breathability of the floor. The landing floors and stair treads & risers will be carefully cleaned and coated with a penetrating wax or oil to preserve and enhance their appearance. Regular monitoring of the floors will be carried out to prevent wear from progressing back to bare wood and recoating and effective maintenance will help maintain the floor and its slip resistance.
Flooring to new living rooms, bedrooms and circulation areas within the flats will be covered with loose laid, un-bonded cork matting floating floor on breathable, acoustic underlay to receive new carpet finishes. Flooring to new bathrooms and kitchens will be covered with a decorative, waterproof cork finish floating floor on acoustic underlay. The 2G locking joint in the cork flooring construction makes the floor dimensionally stable and the joints hold tight without screws or glue into historic boards.
This method promotes a holistic, reversible, low impact approach with a focus on accurate diagnosis, sustainable methods, and preserving the character and fabric of building.

Description of Proposed Works

The application is for change of use to the front ground first & second floor to form A4 planning class use with one 2-Bed residential duplex apartment to the rear.
It is proposed to remove the modern partitioning to the ground floor to create an open plan restaurant. Part of the ground floor will be partitioned off to form a bin store/bike store serving the proposed new flat & restaurant. Bin storage is also available for use by the tenant via the Landlord in No. 30 opposite as they own and control both No's 30, 31 & Overton Arcade.
A small area of re-roofing works has been required under the previous approval, as the box gutter has failed to the front of the building causing the ceiling to collapse in places due to the ingress of water and this was be done in traditional materials using building methods respectful to the era of the building. A structural repair has been carried out to one damaged roof truss and the water damaged plaster to the walls has been carefully removed and new lintels replace the water damaged lintels over all second floor windows to the frontage;



Walls will be finished in a lime based breathable plaster and ceilings will be repaired with timber lathes and lime based plaster.
The modern partitioning to the first & second floor is to be partially removed and new timber studwork provided where required ensuring no damage/contact occurs to existing features like covings or skirtings.
2 No. conservation roof lights are proposed to the new apartment in Bedrooms 1 & 2.

Schedule of works & Justification

Little remains of the internal features internally to the rear of the building where Unit 1 is proposed following previous modernisation.
Within the works proposed under this application wherever possible existing features and openings are retained. A suspended ceiling to the ground floor has been installed and this has been carefully removed and the existing ceiling is to be made good as required using traditional materials and building methods. New suspended ceilings are then proposed to the underside of each floor to provide a service area, opportunity to provide breathable insulation and avoid unnecessary works to the original flooring above. Internally the external walls are generally in a good condition apart from localised water damage to the second floor frontage due to the leaking box gutter. The walls will only require redecoration and where it is decided to re-finish existing walls a new skim will be applied with an emulsion paint finish. Walls to whb splashbacks will have a tiled or sheet finish.
New partitions are to be formed to limit any negative impact on the existing retained features, comprising timber framing faced either side with plasterboard and skim with acoustic quilt within the cavity. Necessary improvements to the acoustic performance and fire rating of floors will be carried out from below to limit the loss or damage to flooring. Existing floor boarding shall be retained for re-use in the same locations. Electrical and plumbing works can be laid between the floor joists and acoustic insulation incorporated prior to re-boarding. Where necessary ceilings will be underdrawn with acoustic and fire rated board between existing cornicing, limiting any effect.
Internally certain historic features remain, for example to the ground floor, the original ceiling is concealed beneath the later suspended ceiling. The full extent of any repairs will need to be assessed and agreed once the ceiling has been exposed. To the upper floor original ceilings and covings remain. As new suspended fire/noise separation ceiling is to be installed the remaining features will be retained and hidden/protected from further damage. New partitions will be formed around these remaining features. Original skirting boards also remain and should provide a template for any reinstatement. Existing windows throughout will be retained and overhauled and removable secondary glazing fitted. Contemporary windows (WS05) will be replaced with windows more in keeping with the age of the building. 2 No. conservation roof lights are proposed to the second floor flat and this small addition is felt to be more sympathetic to the listed building than a dormer for example, it will also provide a good standard of modern living accommodation, light and ventilation whilst having minimal impact on a building within the conservation area. Details of the proposed conservation roof lights have been submitted in support of the application and photographs of the existing roof void are below which show that the windows can be inserted into the roof plane and any rafters cut can be reused to form the trimmers at the bottom and top of the windows.

The modern staircase to the front of the building is to be removed. It is of little architectural merit and an unsightly bulkhead to the first floor has been formed in studwork & plasterboard which is also to be removed to allow for the formation of Bedroom 1 in Unit 2.
A new spiral staircase is to be inserted into the rear Apartment with the timbers between first floor and second floor being carefully cut away to form the opening through which the stair will penetrate. Existing timbers cut away will be reused as trimmers that form the opening. As there is little to no original features in this part of the building the formation of the stairwell is justified in that it will allow this part of the building to form a duplex flat thereby preserving the building in use.

External facing brick walls are generally in good condition and will be unaffected. Where repointing is required it will be done flush-pointed in lime mortar. Similarly cast iron rwg's will be retained and repaired as required.
New internal drainage will be necessary to service kitchens and bathrooms. Stacks will be encased to maintain fire separation between flats & floors, finished and decorated to match the adjoining walls. Any new internal stacks will terminate with an automatic air admittance valve, avoiding the need to penetrate the roof.
Any new mechanical ventilation will be directly through external rear walls or ducted to the rear elevations.

EXTERNAL DOORS
External door WG01 to be retained & overhauled. Although not original or period to the property it is in good repair and does not detract from the front elevation. New door DG02 to be provided to the side entrance within Overton Arcade, please refer to drawing 811/A(2)01.

WINDOWS:

External windows require Investigation to determine the state of repair required.

The windows to the frontage in particular form an important part of the streetscape to High Street.

Windows to be stripped and retained, make good/repair to timber surrounds and main casement/sashes where required. Retain and clean off paint to all ironmongery and replace. Clean all glazing and retain, re-glaze where necessary using traditional methods.

Paint stripping on site, method statement required in respect of the following
Please note- lead based paint probably used on existing windows, frames and side panels.
Method statements on removed and consequential residues will be required.

Should broken panes need to be replaced, replaced using 2mm or 3mm “horticultural – type glass. Alternatively heated distorted glass may be used to the approval of the C.A. (all to match existing)

ROOF WINDOWS:
Provision of 2 No. roof lights are required to facilitate the proposed development. The proposed roof lights would be small in scale and set below the ridge line. They would be of a conservation style with a central vertical glazing bar and have a black powder coated frame. The size, scale, number and positioning of the rooflights has been carefully considered to ensure that the special and historic interest of the building is not compromised. The proposed works/alterations are all in line with policy guidance contained within the local and national planning policies which clearly resist any development that causes harm to the historic environment and properties.

WINDOW IRONMONGERY:

Sash windows.
If re-glazing after sash weights to suit the new weight of the sash counterweight pully wheels. Clean off any paint and ensure that they are running free. Only replace if broken and to the approval of the C.A. Strip and clean off paint of all ironmongery and replace.

WALLS:

Further site investigation required in respect of this item.

Ceramic wall tiles:
Allow for hacking off/stripping out and cart away.

Where the tiles have been applied to the walls that are to remain the making good of those walls are to be as described elsewhere.
Care to be exercised in removing the tiles from walls to remain as they may cover/be attached to skirting etc. that are to be retained.

Wall removal:
Walls indicated on plans for complete removal must have received the C.A. and structural engineer's consent for removal prior to the works commencing.

Where infill panels are required in existing door opening care should be taken as not to damage existing skirting and architrave. New infill panels to be set back from opening edge as to show an existing opening was present in the past.

Vertical ducts removed:
All timber plasterboard ducts are to be removed and carted away. Take care as not to damage any existing Listed Building items.

NEW PARTITIONS
Where new partitions are to be placed, care should be taken so that no Listed Building items are removed/damaged.
All new partitions formed against any cornice and skirtings etc should be formed so that they fit around the features with care taken to ensure that items are not damaged. Works must be completed so that partitions can be removed without any implications to the Listed Items.
See also existing photographs below.

STAIRCASES
See also existing photographs below.
To be read in conjunction with schedule of works above.
Carefully remove existing staircases as noted on drawings and insert 1No. spiral staircase. Existing timber trimmers are to be retained, repaired and reused where required, all to be advised by the Specialist Sub-contractor and instructed by the Architect/S.E.
Existing staircase to ground floor to be carefully removed. Surrounding area to be made good.
Existing floor joists to be carefully removed where noted on drawings to 'Flat 1' and surrounding area made good in preparation for new spiral staircase as detail drawing 811/L(2)01.
New independently supported spiral staircase to be constructed in 'Flat 1'.
The contractor is to perform work in such a manner as to ensure the safety of all operatives and the public and to cause as little disturbance as possible.
The contractor is to be responsible for the design and supply of all temporary works including but not limited to, propping, scaffolding, and tying in of the works. If the contractor is in any way uncertain as to the extent of temporary works required, seek advice from a suitably qualified engineer. Any advice will not relieve the contractor from ultimate responsibility for the temporary works.

(Note: all internal works that are to be demolished to be checked on site to see if load bearing, any discrepancies, report immediately to architect prior to demolition).

All works to be undertaken to the satisfaction of Building Control and Architect.

NOTE: *CONTRACTOR TO PROVIDE METHOD STATEMENT FOR ALL DEMOLITION WORKS TO BE CONFIRMED BY ARCHITECT PRIOR TO ANY WORKS BEING PUT IN HAND.*

NEW FLOORING
Please refer to sections above in regards of proposed floor coverings.

Photographs of Spiral Staircase Insertion Location

1st FLOOR









2nd FLOOR



EXISTING FLOORSPACE VOID



Photographs of Second Floor Suspended Ceiling & Roof Void To Frontage





Photographs of Existing Floor Coverings



Photographs of Existing Roof void & Roof light Insertion Locations





Movement To, From & Within The Development.

The existing front and side accesses are to be retained.

Intention of Works

By refurbishing the original windows to the frontage and providing more sympathetic windows to the side & rear it is intended that the works will enhance this Grade II listed building and the conservation area and will increase the thermal efficiency of the proposed dwellings and ensure the building is sustained in use. The proposals will keep in use and maintain an important town centre building whilst creating additional residential accommodation in an otherwise vacant building. There will be no adverse effect on neighbouring properties or amenities and there will be an improvement in safety.
The application should therefore be supported.
This statement is to be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings forming the application.

END