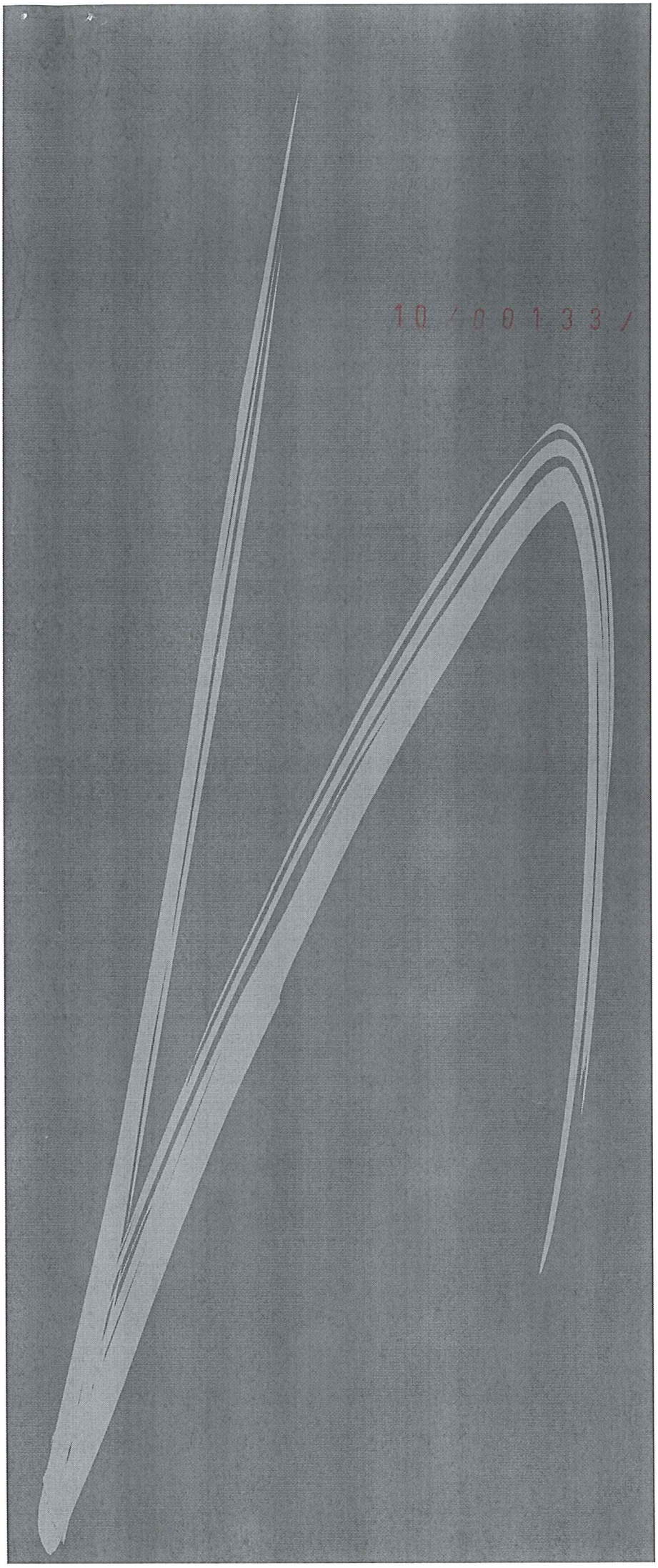

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DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Demolition and Rebuilding of Ground Floor Retail Service Units with Residential Flats over at 4A, 6, 8 and 10 High Street, Biddulph

Client: Mr S Taylor

Ref: 21055

Date: February 2010

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Contents

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Use
3.0	Amount
4.0	Layout
5.0	Landscape
6.0	Scale
7.0	Appearance
8.0	Access

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Design & Access statement has been prepared in response to the Governments changes to the planning application process outlines in circular: *Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System,* which came into effect on the 10th August 2006.

1.2 The statement provides an analysis and narrative of the proposals and is in line with guidance produced by CABE entitled *Design & Access Statements; how to write, read and use them.*

1.3 The application seeks to demolish vacant shop units at 4A, 6, 8 and 10 High Street, Biddulph and reconstruct 3no. retail/service units with 6no. self contained flats over.

1.4 A similar scheme was approved on 26 August 2009 ref 09/00674/FUL. However, upon clearing the site some old basements were found and the applicant considered it prudent to incorporate this area in an underground parking area to improve the serviceability/parking facilities which was somewhat limited in the approved scheme.

1.5 In all other respects the scheme is the same as for the previous scheme with the height, scale and streetscene appearance unaffected by the underground parking provision.

1.6 The demolitions of the buildings and site clearance has recently been completed.

2.0 Uses

2.1 The existing units have been vacant for at least 10 years for a number of reasons notably lack of demand due to the poor quality of the building fabric and the visual appearance.

There has also been a decline in the vitality and viability of Biddulph town centre for retail purposes.

2.2 The application site is towards the southern end of the High Street and is in the Biddulph town centre Area Action Plan where the aim is to both attract residents from the town as well as visitors from outside.

"The town should have a sustainable mix of retail, some community and residential uses, which will provide improved local employment opportunities. A high quality well designed, safe and undesignated centre accessible by a choice of transport modes, a locally distinctive town centre where environmental and heritage assets are maximized."

2.3 The proposed scheme seeks to revitalise this end of the town by providing modern (although of traditional appearance) well insulated retail/service units and residential properties, which will hopefully encourage prospective tenants.

2.4 The last known use of the premises was a bakery, which sold food for consumption off the premises and so would probably be considered in the A5 use class. We also believe that one of the units was temporarily used as a Citizens Advice Centre.

The applicants would not seek to limit the use of the proposed units and would consider that A1 shops, A2 financial and professional services, A3 restaurants/cafes and A5 hot food takeaways would be appropriate for the area and whilst acknowledging that an A5 use would not be acceptable for all 3 units there could be a limit put on the number of any particular use by means of planning condition.

2.5 Pre-application discussions have taken place regarding the residential element of the scheme, where it was confirmed that the provision of 6no. units was essential for the economic viability of the scheme and the applicant will be making a unilateral undertaking to bring the housing forward as affordable/social housing following discussions with the Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Services Section.

2.6 In conclusion it is considered that the redevelopment accords with the aim of the Biddulph town centre area action plan and will contribute positively to the wider aim of the regeneration of the town centre by providing attractive modern shop units with affordable residential accommodation over which it is envisaged will be of interest to both commercial and residential tenants and contribute to the revitalisation of the town centre.

3.0 Amount

3.1 The existing building has a total ground floor area of 241m² comprising a mixture of retail area and outbuildings/storage areas, with a first floor area of 164m², which it appears were a mixture of living accommodation and storage areas.

3.2 The redevelopment will operate a total ground floor retail/service area of 171m², which will be subdivided into 3no. units each of a slightly differing area to meet varying business requirements.

3.3 The first and second floor areas each of approximately 175m² will provide 6no. self-contained flats comprising 4no. two bedroom flats and 2no. one bedroom flats.

3.4 The creation of this number of living units is necessary as part of the business plan to help finance the ground floor commercial element of the scheme.

4.0 Layout

4.1 The layout has been very much influenced by the site constraints and the need to provide units of a viable size (retail and residential) to attract prospective tenants.

4.2 The existing rear yard will be cleared of outbuildings to enable a rear loading/parking area to be achieved.

This underground service yard will also incorporate a bin storage area and undercover cycle parking area.

4.3 The retail units will maximise the available road frontage display area whilst also enabling a street frontage access for the residential element.

There will also be an access to the rear for the residents to access the bin storage area.

4.4 The revised scheme now incorporates and increased car parking facility below the ground floor shop units which will enable parking for 4 no. vehicles and turning facilities within the curtilage of the site.

5.0 Landscape

5.1 The site is fully surrounded by hard paving to the street frontage, which will remain unaffected.

5.2 The rear concrete yard will be removed and replaced with a brick paver finish to form a parking/service yard area.

5.3 The existing unsightly boundary walls, which are a mixture of concrete blockwork and painted brickwork. It will be replaced with brickwork to match the main shop unit.

6.0 Scale

6.1 The proposal seeks to respond to the scale and pattern of the adjacent buildings on the street frontage. Whilst the building is three-storey the section is designed to minimise the eaves height and thus reduce its apparent scale. The ground level is also falling away from the adjacent buildings. The result of this is that the roofline steps only marginally and to a very similar degree to other steps in the roofline of the street. This helps to maintain the pattern and rhythm of the existing architecture. The window sizes and proportions are also designed to maintain the existing rhythm and scale of the frontage. The building line is also respected maintaining the sense of enclosure to the street.

6.2 The scale of the revised scheme will remain unaffected when viewed from the High Street however to take advantage of the basement areas that have been found and with the ground level to the rear already being lower it was considered appropriate to further reduce the ground level to enable access and car parking area to be formed.

This element of the works will be in an enclosed yard area.

7.0 Appearance

7.1 The materials and detailing selected are intended to respond to some of the Victorian features found elsewhere in the street. Whilst the adjacent buildings are not in particularly good order and have been altered extensively the new proposal aims to respond positively to its historic context and set a benchmark for sensitive interventions in the future. The shop fronts are given particular attention and recall the traditional fronts that might have been present in the street's heyday and the ornate eaves detail also references Victorian architecture. To the rear the elevations are kept simple with well-proportioned openings and traditional materials. Overall, the proposal is a good neighbour seeking to raise the quality of the area whilst politely respecting its context.

7.2 The Biddulph High Street frontage is fairly typical, simple late Victorian style. However many of the original shop fronts have been lost. The proposal seeks to provide an uplift elevationally to the streetscene and provide a prominent feature in the otherwise fairly unremarkable group of buildings.

7.3 The shop frontages will have timber fascias and pilasters with timber door and windows – These to be painted in 'conservation' colours with the facing bricks and tiles to be from traditional local palette of colours.

7.4 The principle streetscene elevation will remain as the approved scheme with the only change being to the basement/ground floor elevations to the rear which will retain the simple symmetrical form with a fully open access to the basement.

8.0 Access

8.1 For the purposes of this statement, compliance with the current edition of the Building Regulation Part M is assumed to be covered within the detailed design and the proposals, as this is mandatory. It is not intended to therefore provide exhaustive coverage of all means taken to secure such compliance.

8.2 For the purposes of this statement of the definition of "disability" is taken as that in Part 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

8.3 The site is considered to be in a sustainable location being close to the Biddulph town centre close to main bus routes to both the Potteries and Congleton.

8.4 There is currently only a pedestrian access to the rear of the premises, but the applicant has a right of access over land to the rear, which will enable vehicular access to the rear service yard for loading/unloading purposes although with the revised scheme the servicing of the shops will be more practical from the High Street as for the other shops in the vicinity. The revised scheme will provide improved parking/turning facilities within the site curtilage.

The rear yard will also accommodate a bin storage area and an undercover cycle rack.

8.5 A level ramped access will be provided to each of the new units off the street frontage with an ambulant disabled staircase again accessed of the street frontage.