FORWARD PLANNING
AND
DEVELOPMENT

# 14 Market Place, Leek Staffordshire, ST13 5HH
# Planning Statement

On behalf of: **Arc Dev (Wigan) Limited**

9 October 2017

File ref: FW008

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Report prepared by: Faye Wright

01295 711 928

07812 140 099

Faye@fwpd.co.uk

# 1 Introduction

1.1 This planning statement describes the planning application for a development at 14 Market Place, Leek, Staffordshire (herein referred to as "the building").

1.2 This planning application is a renewal of a previous planning permission (Ref: SMD/2014/0559). This planning permission was for the conversion of the upper floors of 14 Market Place to residential use to create three, one bedroomed flats and a two storey side extension. This was granted on 11 November 2014 and is due to expire shortly.

1.3 The submitted application is identical to the previously approved application and the proposed layouts of the residential units have been checked against Lifetime Homes standards.

1.4 The building is currently in retail use at ground floor level as a single retail unit. The upper floors are currently vacant.

1.5 This application proposes the change of use of the upper floors (first and second floor) to three one bedroom residential units. A small two storey side extension is proposed which enables separate, self-contained access to the proposed residential units.

1.6 Planning permission is sought for:

**"Conversion of first and second floors to create three, one bedroomed flats and two storey side extension".**

1.7 This planning statement is one of a number of documents, which have been submitted in support of the application for planning permission. The other supporting application documents are:

- Planning application forms;
- Ownership Certificate A;
- A site location plan;
- Existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations;
- Planning Statement produced by Forward Planning and Development
- Heritage Statement produced by Forward Planning and Development
- Design and Access Statement (including Lifetime Homes Statement) produced by Building Link Design.

1.8 This planning statement provides a comprehensive review of national and local planning policy and guidance relevant to the nature of the proposals and the specific degree to which the proposals would accord with the policies of the statutory development plan. It also considers other material considerations, in accordance with the requirements of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2005. It is concluded that the development proposals accord with the aims and objectives of national, strategic and local planning policy and therefore support the grant of planning permission.

## 2 Site and surroundings

2.1 The building is located on the southern side of Market Place between Derby Street to the east and Stanley Street to the west.

2.2 The site extends to 0.134 hectares.

2.3 The existing building currently provides a single retail unit at ground floor level which is occupied by Co-operative Travel with two upper floors which are currently vacant. The ground floor retail unit does not form part of this application.

2.4 The building comprises three storeys and forms part of a terrace of buildings which run from east to west along Derby Street and Stanley Street. The building has a pitched roof, a distinctive window at first floor level (thought to be a late C19 or early C20 first floor shop window) and two sash windows at second floor level.

2.5 There is a yard area to the rear of the site accessed via an alley way and a public car park to the rear of the yard area.

2.6 The site is located within the Leek Town Centre Conservation Area.

2.7 The surrounding area is characterised predominantly by retail uses at ground floor level and a mix of uses on upper floors.

# 3 Planning History

3.1 A comprehensive review of the Statutory Register of Planning Applications held by the Staffordshire Moorlands Council has been carried out.

3.2 With the exception of the schemes approved in 2011 and 2014, the applications on the statutory register do not have any relevance to this application but for the sake of completeness these are summarised below:

**80/09022/OLDDC – Change of use to offices - withdrawn**

**81/09825/OLDDC – Change of use to fish and chip shop - refused**

**83/12191/OLDDC – New shopfront - approved**

**00/00977/ADV – Advertisement Consent for an illuminated sign - approved**

**04/01002/ADV – Non illuminated projecting sign - approved**

**11/00378/FUL – conversion of first and second floors to three, one bedroom flats and two storey side extension - approved**

**12/00057/FUL – erection of a two storey building comprising two apartments**

**Pre-application discussions**

3.3 Pre-application discussions have not been held in relation to the submitted application as it is identical to the application previously approved but pre-application discussion were held in 2011. Officers advised that:-

- The principle of residential was acceptable as it would contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- The first floor shop front should be retained;
- The shop fascia should be finished in a dark Victorian colour;
- Quality facing materials and joinery should be incorporated;

- The scheme is acceptable in highways terms given the proximity to public parking and the town centre.

# 4 Proposed Development

4.1 As set out previously, the proposal seeks to convert the first and second floors of the existing building into residential use to create three self-contained residential units each comprising one bedroom. A small two storey side extension will be constructed to create separate access to the residential units.

4.2 The ground floor will remain in retail use and no changes are proposed to the retail unit.

4.3 Each residential unit will provide a bedroom, a bathroom and a kitchen/living area.

4.4 The existing building will be retained with limited external alterations proposed. The first floor window which is currently covered with acrylic advertisements will be re-glazed with a safety glass and will be obscured up to a height of approximately 0.8 metres. This proposal will result in a significant enhancement to the appearance of the existing building.

4.5 The proposed side extension will be approximately 5.2 metres high, 5.8 metres long and 1.4 metres wide. It will have a monopitch roof and a ground floor timber entrance door. A window will be provided at first floor level of the extension to create natural light to the staircase. A small additional window will be provided on the eastern elevation of the building to provide additional light to the rear first floor flat.

4.6 Access to the new residential units will be gained from the rear.

4.7 Planning permission is therefore sought for:

**"Conversion of the first and second floors to three one bedroom flats and two storey side extension".**

4.8 Further detail can be found in the Design and Access Statement prepared by Building Link Design.

# 5 Planning Policy Framework

5.1 Relevant planning policy for this site comprises:-

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012;

5.2 Local policy is contained within the Core Strategy March 2014 and other Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs) produced by Staffordshire Moorlands Council.

5.3 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.4 The Council is currently working on a new local plan (Local Plan 2016-2031). This is currently at preferred options stage and is not considered material to the determination of this application.

### National Planning Policy

5.5 The NPPF document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It summarises in a single document, previous national planning policy statements. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material considerations in planning decisions

5.6 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF states that in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, local planning authorities should:-

**"plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends and the needs to different groups in the community (such as families with children, older people, people with disabilities".**

### Local Planning Policy

5.7 The local planning policy document is the Core Strategy which was adopted on 26 March 2014.

# 6 Principal Planning Considerations

### Existing land use

6.1 The building is currently in use as a single retail unit at ground floor level and the upper floors are vacant.

6.2 The proposal does not involve any change to the existing retail use which accords with the Council's objective to ensure the long-term viability and vitality of Leek.

### Proposed Residential Use

6.3 The proposal involves the conversion of the upper floors of the building into three residential units.

6.4 The principle of the proposed use of the building for residential use accords with National and Local Planning Policy objectives.

6.5 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF identifies that to deliver a wider choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:-

- Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs to different groups in the community;
- Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand.

6.6 One of the Council's spatial objectives is to "provide new housing that is affordable, desirable, well-designed and meets the needs of residents of the Moorlands". (Policy SO4.

6.7 The provision of sustainable, decent and affordable housing for all sectors of the community remains one of the priorities of the Council (paragraph 8.4.1).

6.8 Policy H1 relates to new housing developments and aims to provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures. Proposals for ten dwellings or more should provide a mix of

dwellings and all new dwellings should aim to be built to “Lifetime Homes” standard and must meet the sustainable design and construction requirements set out in policy SD1.

6.9 Paragraph 8.5.11 recognises that upper floors in the town centres are not use to their full capacity. It states that “there is a local need for housing in accessible locations as well as the other benefits residential use could bring, such as security outside normal working hours and assisting with the development of the evening economy”.

6.10 The proposals involve an increase in residential floorspace and the creation of three one bedroom units. This is considered appropriate and is wholly supported by national and local policies both in respect of securing the vitality and viability of the town centre and the need for additional, quality housing in sustainable locations.

## Design

6.11 Design has been fully considered throughout the development of the proposal. This section seeks to provide a summary of the proposal and its design in the context of relevant policy.

## General Design Principles

6.12 The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment in the NPPF. Paragraph 56 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good plan, and should contribute positive to making places better for people.

6.13 Paragraph 57 of the NPPF stipulates that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality inclusive design for all development.

## 6.14 Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy

6.15 It is one of the Council’s objectives to promote local distinctiveness by means of good design and the conservation, protection and enhancement of historic, environmental and cultural assets throughout the district. The Council’s design policies seek to ensure that all development is well designed to contribute to and complement the special character of the area.

6.16 In particular policy DC1 states that development should (inter alia):

a) **be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detail and materials appropriate to the character of the area;**

b) **be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.**

6.17 The proposals involve limited external alterations but all elements of the proposed design will be of a high quality. The proposed side extension to accommodate the entrance staircase will be constructed in brick to match the existing building. The design is simple and low key. It is located to the rear of the property and will not have a material impact on the wider area.

6.18 Minor alterations are proposed to the existing first floor window. The window is currently obscured by acrylic advertising panels. These will be removed and the existing windows retained but with new safety glass inserted and top hung opening lights incorporated. The lower part of the glazing will be obscured.

6.19 The proposed development concept represents a high quality design solution to maximise the development potential of the site whilst reflecting identified constraints.

6.20 The Design and Access Statement prepared by Building Link Design provides further detail on the design approach.

**The Historic Environment**

6.21 Section 12 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and provides guidance on the impact of development on the significance of Designated Heritage Assets and Heritage Assets.

6.22 Policy DC2 states that “the Council will safeguard and, where possible, enhance the historic environment”.

6.23 The building is located within the Leek Town Centre Conservation Area and whilst the building is not identified as being notable in its own right alterations to the building could have an impact on the significance of the conservation area (the Designated Heritage Asset).

6.24 The market place itself is identified as a key element of this part of the Conservation Area.

6.25 The proposals have been carefully considered to ensure that there is no impact upon the significance of the Conservation Area as the Designated Heritage Asset.

6.26 The proposed alterations to the front floor window will enhance this building and contribute to the significance of the conservation area and this building as a heritage asset. The conversion of the upper floors into residential use will bring this vacant floorspace into active use which is supported by National Policy.

6.27 It is therefore considered that the proposals support national and local planning policy relating to the historic environment.

### Amenity and Access

6.28 The proposal has been designed to ensure there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding buildings or that of prospective occupiers.

Whilst no private outdoor amenity space can be provided on this site, the building is located close to public amenities including parks and open spaces.

6.29 The site has good access to services and public transport being in the town centre.

# 7 Summary and Conclusions

7.1 The applicants have instructed Building Link Design to design a scheme for the sustainable conversion of the upper floors to residential use whilst retaining the ground floor retail unit.

7.2 The revised proposals will deliver improvements to the appearance of the building through the removal of existing advertisements at first floor level. All other external alterations have been kept to a minimum to ensure the significance of the Conservation Area is preserved.

7.3 The proposal will result in the conversion and extension of the building to residential use as three residential apartments bringing currently vacant floorspace back into active use.

7.4 The use of the building as three residential units will result in the creation of much needed residential accommodation in accordance with and supported by housing policies at a national and local level.

7.5 The units will comply with Lifetimes Homes standards wherever possible.

7.6 Accordingly, the proposals are fully consistent with the strategic and local objectives for Leek. The proposed scheme ensures that the most is made of the opportunities presented by the building and would make a positive contribution to the future social, economic and environmental well-being of this part of the town.

7.7 The proposal supports the policies of the development plan and in accordance with Section 38(6) of the 2004 Act, planning permission should be granted.