Design and Access Statement

Prepared on behalf of Mr. G. McKay.

Proposed Development of 3No. Apartments at Shoobridge Mill, Shoobridge Street, Leek.



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1 Introduction

1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application & listed Building Consent for the conversion of part of Shoobridge Mill, Shoobridge Street, Leek to 3No. Apartments.

1.2 This Statement has been written to meet the requirements of Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended)

1.3 The current planning climate places great emphasis upon good design; this is further emphasised given the sites sensitive location within the Leek Town Settlement boundary. Our final proposals have been informed by this full site assessment.

1.4 The design and layout shall reflect the site in its full context, including the physical, economic and ecological surroundings, as well as relevant planning policies.

1.5 Careful consideration will be given to space in order to add value and create a sense of place; support visual contrast and biodiversity.

1.6 The Statement seeks to identify the various constraints and influences that have informed the design process and resulted in the submitted design solution. The following matters are addressed in the proceeding sections:

Section 2 - Site Location and Description

Section 3 – Description of the Proposed Development

Section 4 – Design Policy and Guidance

Section 5 – Design Assessment

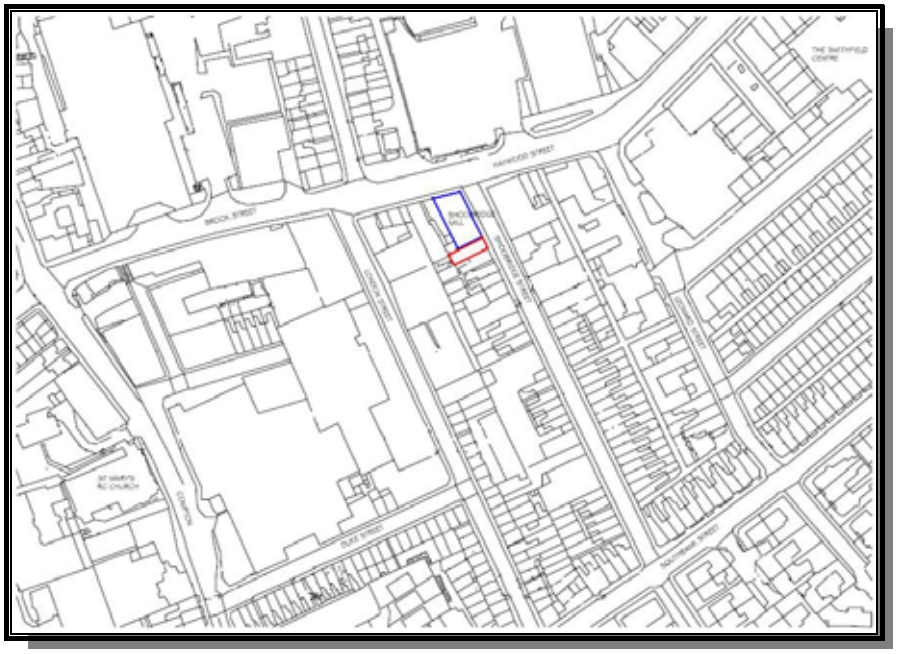
Section 6 – Access Assessment

Section 7 – Key Views of the Site

Section 8 – Conclusions

Section 2 Site Location and Description

LOCATION PLAN



2.1 Our initial conceptual work reflects the exciting opportunity the site represents, whilst acknowledging and adhering to the constraints of the site and those associated with the sensitive location; and the close proximity of a variety of environmental designations.

2.2 The application boundary is shown in red with the adjoining ownership in blue. Shoobridge Mill is Located on the corner of Haywood Street and Shoobridge Street, with the main access to the Apartments off Shoobridge Street.

2.3 As with all town centres, the area surrounding the application site is a diverse mix of commercial and residential units. Along Haywood Street there are mainly retail units with few front flats, while on Leonard, Shoobridge & London Street there are mainly residential units.

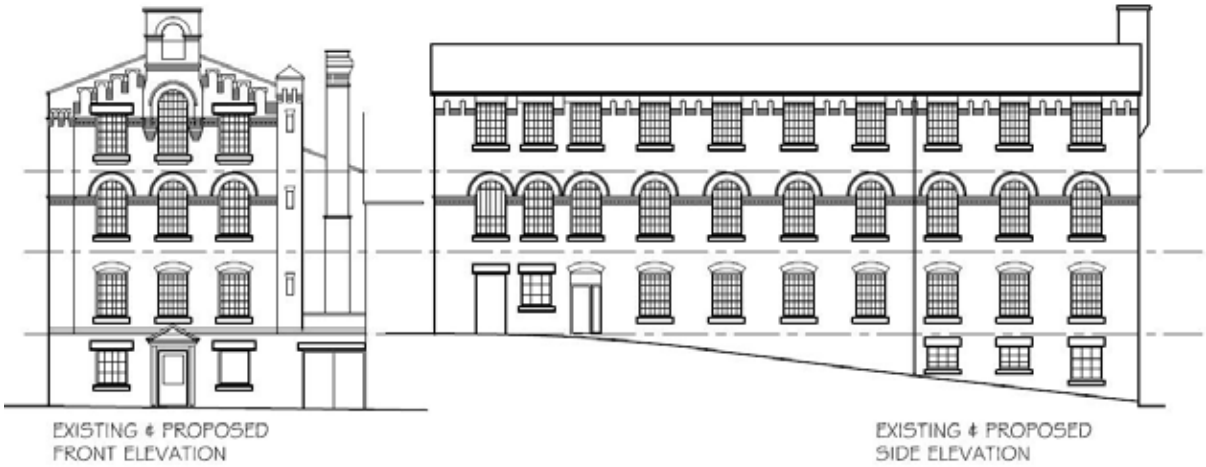
SITE PLAN



Section 3 Description of the Proposed Development

3.1 This application is for the conversion of Shoobridge Mill, over 3 floors, to create 3No. Apartments. The Mill at present is part-vacant and planning permission would aid the maintenance and upkeep of the building.

ELEVATIONS



PLANS



Accommodation Schedule:

APT No.1 – 45.5sqm (490sqft) First Floor Level

APT No.2 – 34.8sqm (375sqft) Second Floor Level

APT No.3 – 43.2sqm (465sqft) Second/Third Floor Level

Section 4 Design Policy and Guidance

National Guidance

4.1 Guidance on design matters is available in the form of a variety of sources. At the national policy level, Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development identifies sustainability as the core principle at the heart of planning decisions. PPS1 advises that sustainability should be promoted through a high quality of good and inclusive design. Paragraph 35 states that:

> *"High quality and inclusive design should create well mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation".*

4.2 Paragraph 35 also states that good design should:

- Address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;
- Be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;
- Be an integral part of the process for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;
- Create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and
- Consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment.

4.3 PPS3 advises on 'Designing for Quality' and states that:

> *'Local planning authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type of residential environments they wish to see and develop plans and policies aimed at:*
>
> *(a) creating places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity, and positively improve local character; and*
>
> (b) *which promote designs and layouts that are inclusive, safe, take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety, ensure adequate natural surveillance and make space for water where there is flood risk'.*

4.4 In particular PPS3 advises in paragraph 37 that new development should be of a high quality and consistent with PPS1 and that design issues should be;

> *'informed by its wider context, having regard not just to neighbouring buildings but to the townscape and landscape of the wider locality. This does not mean that new development should replicate it surroundings. The key consideration should be whether a development positively improves the character and environmental quality of an area and the way it functions.'*

4.5 The PPS3 'Design Companion Guide' provides advice on design issues and the impact that these may have upon housing developments. It states that:

> *'The successful integration of new housing with its surrounding context is a key design objective, irrespective of whether a site lies on the urban fringe or at the heart of a town centre. A crucial first step in achieving this is to develop a thorough understanding of the context within which the new housing will sit and then of the nature of the site itself and its immediate surroundings. This initial analysis will inform a whole range of subsequent design decisions including, for example:*
>
> - *scale and massing of development;*
> - *framework for movement;*
> - *landform, landscape and ecology of the site;*
> - *orientation of the dwelling;*
> - *mix of uses and provision of community facilities; and*
> - *amount and arrangement of car parking.*

4.6 Regional Spatial Strategy

The adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (in the form of RPG13) has regard to design at **Policy DP3 'Quality in New Development'**, which requires new developments to demonstrate good design quality and respect for their setting. The policy also encourages Local Planning Authorities to prepare local design strategies and principles to guide development proposals.

4.7 West Midlands Best Practice Design Guide

Published in draft on 30th June 2005 by the West Midlands regional Assembly the guidance has been devised "to provide a valuable introduction to the many types of design that should

be considered by all parties involved in the planning process and to the issues that will need to be addressed."

The guide covers a number of design topics including:-

- Designs on security
- Access all areas
- Eco homes
- Energy efficiency
- The use of renewable energy
- Remaining in character : Integration with landscape
- Designing the public realm
- Accessibility : The transport issue
- Sustainability drainage systems

Within the introductions to the guidance it is stated that:-

> *"High quality, sustainability design is not just an ideal, but an objective that can be achieved with a clear understanding of the role and function of places and by following guidelines for best practice".*

4.8 Staffordshire Moorlands local Plan

4.9 Policy B13 'Design' outlines the criteria for design considerations in new developments, with the following points relevant to the proposed scheme as follows:-

- The scale, density and massing of the proposed development relate well to its locality;
- The development includes characteristics of local distinctiveness in terms of design, layout and material;
- The building lines and layout of the development relate to those of the locality;
- External boundary and surface treatment is included as part of the development and is of a design and materials which related will to its surroundings;
- The development pays special attention to views into and out of any adjoining green space, or area of green belt;
- The development has regard to and does not detract from the city's skyline, roofscape and local views within the city;
- The satisfactory development or redevelopment of adjoining land is not prejudiced;
- There is no severe loss of amenity or privacy to adjacent residents;

- Adequate arrangements are made for the storage and collection of refuse within the curtilage of the site and the provision of litter bins where appropriate;
- The exterior of the development incorporates material to discourage graffiti; and
- Adequate arrangements are made for pedestrian and vehicular access and for car parking.

4.10 The policy goes on to state that in terms of design:

> *"New development should respect, complement and contribute to the character of the area, and make an improvement to areas where this is required"* (Para 7.135)

4.11 Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 10 'New Residential development' concerns itself with all aspects of new residential development, in particular it states that the design of new housing should:-

> *"Contribute to improving the quality of the urban environment in particular account should be taken of the character of the surrounding built form, paying particular regard to scale, building lines, roofscape, architectural features and materials."*

4.12 Listed Buildings - Policy B5

The retention and restoration of listed buildings will be encouraged. Demolition of listed buildings will rarely be acceptable though there may be cases very occasionally where this is unavoidable. The local planning authority will only consider granting listed building consent to demolish where all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses and these efforts have failed.

Policy B6

Listed building consent will only be granted for alterations and extensions to listed buildings where proposals respect the architectural and historic character in design, materials and scale.

Policy B7

Change of use may be permitted in a listed building provided that the character of the building is preserved.

4.13 Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) provides a full statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment. It explains the role played by the planning system in their protection.

4.14 By Design: Better Places to Live

The DETR published design guidance in 2002. Whilst the guidance strictly relates to residential development, it identifies a number of objectives that are considered pertinent to a range of land uses, to include:

- Character – to promote character in town spaces by reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development
- Continuity and enclosure – to promote the continuity of street frontages and the definition of public and private space by enclosure
- Quality of the public realm – to promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe and accessible for all
- Ease of movement – to promote permeability and connectivity between public spaces

4.15 Secured by Design

Secured by design is a police initiative to encourage the inclusion of crime prevention measures in new developments. The guidance is founded upon a number of core principles, which include:

- The creation of attractive environments which meet the needs of legitimate users
- Effective site management and maintenance to encourage active use
- The encouragement of natural surveillance and overlooking
- The use of appropriate landscaping and planting to reduce the opportunity for crime
- The use of barriers to create a sense of community and ownership
- The use of appropriate lighting to enhance security and reduce anonymity

Section 5 Design Assessment

5.1 Constraints

The design assessment has been broken down into key design elements in order to assist consideration.

5.1.1 Car parking

Parking policy is currently influenced by a desire for environmental sustainability and improvements in urban design. Sustainability seeks to establish less reliance than previously existed on private car usage, for example by promoting compact urban development in areas well served by good public transport. Urban design policy promotes a departure from the 'roads first, houses later' philosophy (as dictated by many highway standards) to give precedence to the relationship between buildings rather than strict adherence to predetermined road design in new residential environments. Beyond this qualitative study, examples of 'best practice' are presented that examine, amongst other things, car-reduced/car-free development and international work on both the accommodation and reduction of parking in residential environments.

5.1.2 Pedestrian & Disabled Access

Pedestrian access to Apartment No.1 & 2 is provided from Shoobridge Street. Level access to these apartments is provided with full compliance with Part ‘M’ of the building regulations.

5.1.3 Cycle Parking

The use of public transport and cycles for residential users is to be encouraged. With its Town centre location the scheme enjoys public transport literally on its doorstep, as well as a few public car parks in proximity.

5.1.4 Refuse/Recycling

Refuse and recycled materials are to be stored at First Floor level within the entrance area.

5.1.5 Grade II Listed Building

This Grade II listed building will be subject to all the constraints of a satisfactory conversion to residential, with the careful consideration from the conservation officer

5.2 Site Layout

The Council’s SPG ‘New Residential Development’ states that:

> *‘habitable room windowed elevations facing single and two storey flanked walls should be a minimum distance of 15m apart, and a further 1m for each additional 1m change in level between affected walls will be required’.*

5.2.1 There are additional windows to be inserted in the rear of the building. Given the compact urban nature of the site these windows have been positioned to minimise any affect on adjoining properties.

5.2.2 All amendments to the structure and insertion of windows will be subject to the conservation officer comments and full designs will be completed once confirmation of window style is agreed.

5.2.3 The proposed building has been converted so as to cause the minimum amount of visual impact to existing residential properties whilst retaining existing site features and working within the physical restraints already identified.

5.3 Building Form/Design

It is not proposed to alter the massing, scaling and form of the building.

5.4 Security/Surveillance

The development will provide improved passive surveillance off Shoobridge Street, London Street and Haywood Street, both through the overlooking of these areas and the increased pedestrian activity related to the occupants and visitors. Access control systems and CCTV surveillance at the building entrances will provide a secure environment and discourage anti-social behaviour.

5.5 Materials

It is not proposed to alter the general external elevations of the existing Mill. Any new materials to areas will match the existing unless otherwise indicated. It is proposed to reinstate many windows to their existing state and as stated above, these will be in compliance with the conservation officers requirements.

5.6 Landscaping

As the building is within a well built up area and the main entrance door opens onto Shoobridge Street, there is no additional landscaping, either hard or soft, to be provided.

5.7 Car Parking

As stated above, the increase to Shoobridge, Haywood and London Street in car usage by a possible 3 cars is perceived to have a minimal impact on the highway system. However, due to its excellent proximity to all amenities & public transport, car expectancy/use is not anticipated.

5.8 Highways & Access

As the new Apartments are off an existing road and entrance door no suggestion will be sort from the Local Authorities Highways department, for improvements/construction of Shoobridge Street.

6 Access Assessment

Constraints

6.1 There are no significant constraints in highways terms that would affect the proposed access to the dwelling.

Layout

6.2 The access & layout of the proposed dwellings is as existing.

Pedestrian Links

6.3 Due to the urban nature and proximity of amenities and public transport (Bus station off Leonard Street), the site pedestrian permeability is simple and accessible.

Security

6.4 The development provides security and natural surveillance to reduce any risk of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Materials

6.5 New timber windows are to be added to the rear elevation - to the approval of the conservation officer.

Building Form

6.6 The conversion has been designed to allow access for all even though there are steep levels and will be in accordance with Building Regulations and DDA Regulations. Disabled access will be approved as part of the building control submission as well as entrance door sizes etc.

Wider Accessibility

6.7 The site is accessible by a variety of modes of transport i.e. bus, cycle and good pedestrian links and therefore the proposed scheme accords with one of the governments key objectives as set out in PPS3 which is to:

> *'create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas. Developments should be attractive, safe and designed and built to a high quality. They should be located in areas with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.'*

7 Key Views of the Site

7.1 For the purpose of this Section, four key views of the site have been identified in order to assess the positive impact the proposed development will make. All four key views are defined as follows:

- View 1 – Haywood Street (Up & Down);
- View 2 – Shoobridge Street;
- View 3– Shoobridge Mill Front;
- View 4 – Shoobridge Mill Side;
- View 5 - Shoobridge Mill Rear;
- View 6 - London Street;
- View 7 - Third Floor Internal
- View 8 - Second Floor Internal
- View 9 - Aerial

View 1 - Looking up Haywood Street



View 1 – Looking Down Haywood Street



View 2 – Looking up Shoobridge Street



View 3 - Shoobridge Mill Front Elevation



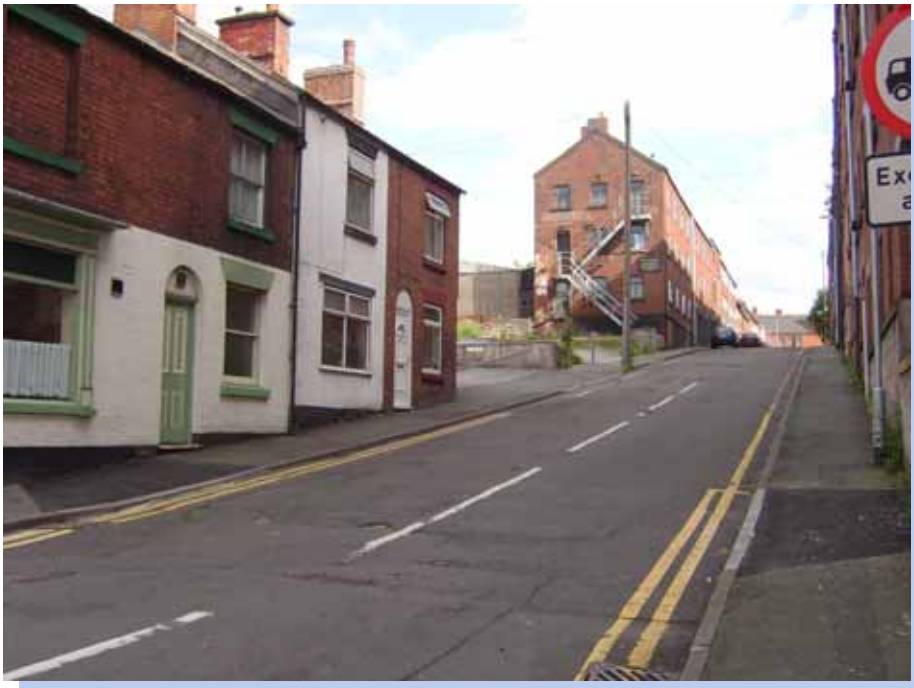
View 4 - Shoobridge Mill Side Elevation



View 5 - Shoobridge Mill Rear Elevation



View 6 - Looking up London Street



View 7 - Third Floor Internal



View 8 – Second Floor Internal



View 9 - Aerial



8 Conclusions

The site currently comprises a redundant Grade II listed building situated in an important location, which presents a poor face to this important frontage on the corner of Shoobridge Street and Haywood Street. The development provides the opportunity to restore the remaining redundant building and provide it with an appropriate function and a viable future. The approach to the re-use fully respects and restores the original internal layout and provides new residential accommodation through selective and sympathetic interventions. The minimal internal works have been kept to the necessary to secure the intended use, as well as the importance of the listed building. Indeed, as an integral part of a wider, comprehensive scheme, the proposed re-use of the building is an important benefit to Leek Town.

The proposed development will serve to restore and preserve this visually important listed building. It also complies with the policies of the adopted Local Plan and therefore it is recommended that the planning application including listed building permission be granted.