

Planning and Heritage Statement for the conversion of former public house to 4 residential units

The Swan Inn, Town End, Cheadle

August 2021

Conversion of former public house to 4 residential units – The Swan Inn, Town End

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.
- 1.2 The author of this statement, Teodora Golemdzhiyska graduated from University of Liverpool with a 1st Class Masters in Town and Regional Planning. She is a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and is currently working as a Planner in the private sector.

2 Site and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site comprises the former public house, The Swan Inn, which is formed of the main building and a brick built mews alongside elongated garden space to the rear of the site. The building is two storey with a basement portion with the ground floor operating as a pub and the upper floors being used as self-contained residential accommodation.
- 2.2 The site immediately fronts Town End and is located within the centre of Cheadle where it neighbours mainly residential properties.
- 2.3 The rear garden space is enclosed by hedge planting and trees.
- 2.4 The site is a Grade II listed property.
- 2.5 The site has no planning history of relevance to this application.
- 2.6 The site and surroundings are shown on the aerial photograph overleaf:



Figure 1 – Aerial photograph of site and surroundings

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The public house has suffered a similar fate to many pubs across the country which have been impacted on by economic factors, which alongside the struggles that have come about from the Covid pandemic, have resulted in the closure of many public houses. The public house has been closed since mid 2020.
- 3.2 The public house was then actively advertised for a number of months before it was bought by 8888 Capital Group in September 2020.
- 3.3 The applicant then purchased the property at auction in early 2021 with the view of bringing an active use back to the site. The many months of marketing show that there is no interest in the site being occupied as a public house again and the most viable option is proving to be the conversion of the property to residential accommodation.

- 3.4 Having met with an architect it became clear that the property can easily be converted to 4 residential units without requiring any significant external/internal alterations which could harm any of the original fabric.
- 3.5 Permission is therefore sought for the conversion of the property to form 4 residential units each with private rear garden space. The units will comprise of the following –
- 1 x three bedroom unit arranged over two storeys
 - 2 x two bedroom units arranged over two storeys
 - 1 x one bedroom unit (mews)
- 3.6 The proposals will ensure no alterations to external fabric of the original Historic Public House. Furthermore, the proposals will retain internal walls and all period features with the main building.
- 3.7 However, the proposals would mean alterations to the outbuilding at the rear of the Public House. It should be noted that the outbuilding at the rear of the original Public House (proposed Mews) and the flat roof is a much later add-on circa 1980's-1990's. The alterations would involve infilling of part of the Mews wall and the removal of the corridor and the flat roof (between the mews and the main building) which are required to separate the mews from the main building. Rooflights are to be added to the roof of the mews.
- 3.8 There are minimal internal works proposed mainly confined to the erection of stud partition walls and a staircase to allow access to the upstairs from the east portion of the building.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 Chapter 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has 3 overarching objectives –
- a) An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
 - b) A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment.
 - c) An environmental objective - to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity etc..
- 4.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It explains that in the context of decision taking, this means approving proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.
- 4.3 The Staffordshire Moorlands District Local Plan is up-to-date.
- 4.4 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF encourages the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Paragraph 120 of the NPPF goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing.

- 4.5 Chapter 12 of the Framework includes a number of paragraphs relating to the importance of appropriate design. Paragraph 124 encourages the creation of high-quality buildings which raise the quality of the built environment and create better places in which to live and work.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2014 - 2033)

- 4.6 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan is the adopted development plan document which sets out the spatial and strategic policies for the district during the period coving 2014 and 2023. The most relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan are set out below.

Policy SS 7 : Cheadle Area Strategy

The Council and its partners will seek to expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and a market town. This will be achieved through the following actions:

1. Expand the housing making area and community provision by:

- Increasing the range of available and affordable house types and higher market housing, including for first time buyers and families;*

Policy C1 : Creating Sustainable Communities

In order to create sustainable communities at a local level the Council will:

- 1. Support proposals which protect, retain or enhance existing community facilities (including multi use and shared schemes) or provide new facilities. New facilities should preferably be located within defined built up areas where they are most accessible. In exceptional cases facilities may be located adjacent to these areas where it can be demonstrated that this is the only practical option and where a site is well related to the existing settlement.*

2. *Safeguard land required for the provision of facilities to meet existing and future community needs, as identified by service providers.*
3. *Resist proposals involving the loss of community facilities unless:*
 - a) *an alternative facility of the same type and quality that meets the needs of the community is available in the locality or can be provided in an accessible location in the same locality; or*
 - b) *a viability appraisal including a marketing exercise by a qualified professional demonstrates that there are no options for continued or shared use as any type of community facility which are financially viable and it can be demonstrated that loss of the facility would not disadvantage local residents.*
 - c) *In the case of proposals to change use from one type of community facility to another, the Council will consider the respective benefits of both the existing and proposed uses in terms of their contribution to the community's ability to meet its day to day needs.*
4. *Only permit new development where the utility, transport and community infrastructure necessary to serve it is either available, or will be made available by the time it is needed. All development proposals must therefore either incorporate the infrastructure required as a result of the scheme, or make provision for financial contributions and/or land to secure such infrastructure or service provision at the time it is needed, by means of conditions or a planning obligation in line with the Developer Contributions SPD, or any subsequently adopted Community Infrastructure Levy.*
5. *Support the relocation of uses which are no longer compatible with their surroundings due to negative amenity issues such as noise or accessibility where an alternative suitable site can be secured, subject to the requirements set out in Policy E 2 in order to facilitate regeneration.*

Policy DC 1 : Design Considerations

All development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of

the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

- 1. be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*
- 2. be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;*
- 3. create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design;*

Policy H1 : New Housing Development

- 1) New housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in Policy H 3, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies.*
- 2) In line with Government legislation the Council will maintain and update a register of those interested in acquiring self-build / custom-build housing plots across the District. Where a demand exists, residential developments of 10 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more will make an appropriate contribution towards this need in agreement with the Council. This will be negotiated on a case by case basis.*
- 3) All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision.*

In addition:

- a) Housing for special groups, particularly for older people and others as identified in the SHMA or successor document should be of a scale and in a location which is appropriate to its needs.*
 - b) Housing proposals of 10 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more will be required to provide a mix of housing in terms of size, type and tenure on the site unless viability or other circumstances exist. The final mix will be negotiated with the developer based on housing needs as informed by the SHMA or successor document and other relevant factors such as available supply and market demand.*
 - c) All housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area. Higher densities will generally be appropriate in locations which are more accessible by public transport and which have good access to services.*
 - d) All new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis subject to considerations such as viability and design.*
 - e) All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.*
- 4) Housing development on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H 2 will be supported as follows:*
- a) Within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages, residential development and development on unidentified (windfall) sites will be permitted, subject to compliance with the Spatial Strategy and wider Local Plan policies*

b) Outside of the development boundaries, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the Spatial Strategy will be supported.

5 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application site is located within Cheadle which Policy SS 2 identifies as one of the largest settlements in the plan area. The plan encourages growth in these settlements as a way to strengthen their role as service centres.
- 5.2 The Vision for Cheadle, which is set out in the Local Plan, encourages growth in housing and employment provision which complements the town's social and physical infrastructure.
- 5.3 The application site is located within a highly sustainable location within the centre of Cheadle where it is within walking distance to the town's facilities, services and open spaces.
- 5.4 The site location is therefore considered a suitable location for residential use in line with the Local Plan's spatial strategy.
- 5.5 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF encourages the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, Paragraph 120 of the NPPF follows on from this and goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

- 5.6 The proposal would deliver four units within an under-utilised building which is a robust structure and is therefore worthy of conversion. The building also offers the opportunity to be converted without requiring any significant works to accommodate the proposed residential units.
- 5.7 The proposal will deliver a variety of unit sizes ranging from 1 bed units to 3 bed. This increases the range of available and affordable house types as encouraged by Policy SS 7 of the Local Plan which encourages market housing of all sizes, especially house sizes suitable for first time buyers.
- 5.8 The rooms in the upper floor of the building are already used as residential accommodation. In accordance with Policy H1 of the Local Plan the proposed conversion of the portion of the building formerly used as a public house will provide for high quality, sustainable housing of a density which is considered appropriate and compatible with the site, which alongside the sustainable and accessible location within close proximity to public transport and good access to services will makes from a successful proposal.
- 5.9 The proposal would result in the loss of the former public house. Policy C1 of the Local Plan resists the loss of community facilities unless the sub-criteria listed under criterion (3) can be satisfied.
- 5.10 One of the criteria is that there must be alternative facilities of the same type and quality that meets the needs of the community in the locality. The site is located in the centre of the town where there is a plethora of public houses of a similar type to The Swan Inn, all of which are within a walking distance of the application site.
- 5.11 Below are just a few of the public houses in the local area.
- The Wheatsheaf

- The Baker's Arms
- The Lamplighter
- The Goldfish Bowl

5.12 The second criteria is that a viability appraisal including a marketing exercise has been undertaken to demonstrate there are no options for continued or shared use as any type of community facility which are financially viable.

5.13 The site had been marketed as a public house since mid 2020 and was subsequently purchased then sold again at auction in April 2021 when the applicant purchased the property. The site was therefore marketed for around 10 months during which time there has been no interest in the use of the building as a public house.

5.14 Over the last few years public houses have become a volatile use with many premises falling under economic pressure owing to a decrease in trade. The added pressure of the Covid pandemic has meant that public houses are still suffering from the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

5.15 The applicant has undertaken a viability review with one of the local Estate Agents and was advised that the property would now be better suited for residential development which is a more viable option both short term and long term.

Impacts on Amenity

5.16 Criterion (e) of Policy H1 of the Local Plan requires all new dwellings to be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.

- 5.17 The proposed residential use of the site is compatible with the residential character of the immediate area.
- 5.18 The size of the units complies with the Nationally Described Space standards and each unit will benefit from sufficient light owing to the good amount of existing openings.
- 5.19 Each unit will benefit from private amenity space within the rear garden area. This space is sufficiently sized to give future residents a place to sit out and hang their washing. The private spaces will be spaces will be separated by timber fence and hedge planting to ensure the spaces benefit from privacy.
- 5.20 There are also a number of local parks within the locality which future residents can easily access.
- 5.21 Parking is not proposed as part of the scheme however owing to the highly sustainable location of the site future residents will be able to access facilities, services and employment opportunities on foot as well as have the option to access sustainable transport modes.
- 5.22 Cheadle itself has a variety of services and facilities including education facilities for a variety of ages, medical centres, supermarkets, religious buildings and leisure/community clubs. In accordance with Paragraph 92 of the NPPF the proposal would meet the aims of achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places by promoting social interaction, ensuring safe and accessible living environment and enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles.

- 5.23 There is a bus stop immediately outside the application site which benefits from a regular service directly linking to Cheadle to Hanley which contains a variety of industries and an array of employment opportunities.
- 5.24 The site does not benefit from any existing parking provision and the public house has always been operated on this basis. The building is in a highly sustainable location, future residents will not have to rely on the private motor car as all facilities are available ‘on the doorstep’ alongside access to a regular bus service linking the site to larger conurbations and employment opportunities. In addition, the existing use would have generated a parking need as well as a number of journeys on the highway network, and this parking need and traffic generation will outweigh the movements associated with the proposed use.
- 5.25 The future occupiers of the proposal are unlikely to own a private vehicle owing to the location of the development which normally attracts non-vehicle owning occupiers who are likely attracted to the site for its sustainable location.
- 5.26 There are a number of public car parks within a short walk to the site as well as the possibility of off-street parking immediately fronting the site where the road is a suitable size to accommodate off-street parking without obstructing the highway or impacting its safety.

Impacts on Character and Appearance

- 5.27 Policy DC 1 of the Local Plan requires development to be of a high quality and to reinforce local distinctiveness.
- 5.28 The scheme does not propose any external alterations which could impact on the appearance of the building, which makes a positive contribution to the townscape.

The small number of alterations will be confined to the rear of the building which has previously been subject to modern additions and alterations over the years.

- 5.29 The removal of the corridor and the flat roof between the main building and the mews will result in betterment to the appearance of the rear exterior of the building by removing unsympathetic later additions.
- 5.30 The rear of the building does not feature as part of the streetscene therefore the minor external alterations and the inclusion of the roof lights within the roof of the mews will not be visible from public vantage points.
- 5.31 The boundary treatment proposed to separate the garden areas to the rear will comprise of a 1.8m high timber boarded fence alongside the existing established hedge planting. The proposed boundary treatment is considered an appropriate way of separating the garden spaces whilst retaining the mature character of the garden.
- 5.32 It follows that the proposal is therefore in line with both national and local policies relating to design.

Other Considerations

- 5.33 The Environment Agency shows the site lying entirely within Flood Zone 1 where there is a low probability of fluvial flooding.
- 5.34 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been completed and supports this application.

6 Heritage Statement

- 6.1 The site is a Grade II listed building. Historic England’s listing description is set out below –

➤ SK 0043-0143 CHEADLE C.P. TOWN END

11/93 The Swan Inn

Inn, probably built as such. Circa 1830. Rendered brick; tiled roof on dentilled eaves course; end and centre ridge stack. Two-storey, four-window front; glazing bar sashes with painted lintels. Entrance to left of right hand window; overlight and C20 part-glazed door; large wrought iron sign bracket over. One of a number of inns close to Cheadle built in conjunction with the improvement of the turnpike roads and including the construction of toll cottages (qv).

- 6.2 A search on the Local HER does not reveal anymore information about the building.
- 6.3 There are no other heritage assets within the immediate area which could be impacted on by the proposal.

Policy Context

- 6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government’s policies in relation to development and the following section is most relevant to this proposal:

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The following paragraphs should be considered with regard to this proposal:

Paragraph 190 advises that in the determination of planning applications local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d) Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF advises that In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF goes on to say that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 201 of the NPPF sets out that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Policy D2 : The Historic Environment

- 1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.*
- 2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF*
- 3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.*
- 4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.*
- 5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.*
- 6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.*
- 7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.*

Statement of Significance

- 6.5 The application site is a well preserved 19th century inn likely to have been built for this purpose as part of the improvement of the turnpike roads alongside the construction of toll cottages.

- 6.6 It is unclear whether the current building is the original inn building owing to the presence of substantial accommodation and rooms in the rear portion which suggest that parts of the building may have been later additions in particular the mews building which appears to be a 1970/80's construction.
- 6.7 The original features in the building are thought to be the timber load beams, tiled floors, timber floorboards, chamfered windows and painted lintels, ground floor front door frame, dentilled eaves course, and the walls within the ground floor and basement portion of the building. The wrought iron hanging sign on the front of the property is also thought to be an original feature.
- 6.8 The significance of the asset therefore derives from the architectural interest of the building which appears as a typical 19th century inn and helps to display the early appearance of built form in the town.

Assessment of Impact

- 6.9 The proposed alterations to the building are minimal. A good portion of the alterations will be focused on the mews and the only alterations to the main building will be confined to the incorporation of stud partition walls and a new staircase.
- 6.10 The stud walls will impact some original fabric, mainly original walls which they will attach to.
- 6.11 The applicant's intention is to retain the original features, outlined in paragraph 6.7 above, as to preserve the character of the building and incorporate these within the conversion. The internal features will therefore remain exposed and continue to be experienced in a similar manner to how they are currently.

- 6.12 Therefore in accordance with Policy D2 of the Local Plan the proposal will conserve and where possible enhance the heritage asset, including its setting through the sensitive conversion of the building and preservation of the features which contribute to the architectural interest of the building.
- 6.13 The harm associated with the proposal is therefore considered to be on the lower side of less than substantial. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that where proposals will lead to less than substantial harm this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.14 Any small harm will be outweighed by the public benefits associated with bringing an active use back to the site which is a more viable use both short term and long term. Also the proposal will deliver residential properties of varying sizes which help contribute to the housing strategy for Cheadle and the Government's initiative to boost housing growth.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposal is for the conversion of the former public house to form 4 residential units with associated private outdoor amenity space. The re-use of the underutilised building is supported by Paragraph 119 and 120 of the NPPF.
- 7.2 The proposed residential use is in compliance with Policies SS 2 and SS7 of the Local Plan which encourage residential development within the most sustainable area, mainly the principle towns.

- 7.3 In accordance with Policy C1 of the Local Plan the loss of the public house as a community facility is justified by the presence similar facilities and a robust marketing exercise which has demonstrated there is no demand for the building to remain in this use. The residential use of the building is therefore considered to be its optimum use.
- 7.4 The proposed scheme ensures future and adjacent residents have an acceptable level of amenity as required for by Policy H1.
- 7.5 The site is not located within an area at risk of flooding and the proposal will not result in impacts to highway safety or ecology.
- 7.6 The Heritage Statement section demonstrates that the proposal would constitute the sensitive conversion of the building which will preserve original features, which contribute to the architectural interest of the building thus ensuring there is less than substantial harm to the Grade II listed building.
- 7.7 The statement demonstrates that the proposal constitutes sustainable development as required by the National Planning Policy Framework and is in broad compliance with Paragraphs 119 and 120 of the NPPF, Policy SS 2, SS 7, C1, H1 and D2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application be approved.