

Design & Access Statement

Proposed Conversion and Extension to Form 7 no. Apartments

at

Former Wesleyan Chapel
Station Road
Biddulph
Stoke on Trent
Staffs

for

Brintonby Limited

June 2014

Robert Berry MCIAT
Architectural Services

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
9.0	Ecological/Environmental Issues

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 This is a full application for the retention and conversion of a former Chapel together with a three storey side extension to form 7 no. self-contained apartments together with associated parking and new vehicular access.
- 1.4 Council records will show that a planning application ref. 10/01139/OUT for the demolition and construction of 9 no. apartments was submitted together with a subsequent application for the demolition and construction of 3 no. dwellings both of which were subsequently withdrawn following discussion with council planning officers.
- 1.5 Pre-application discussions have previously taken place with the planning department where it has confirmed that in policy terms there was no objection to the development of the site for residential purposes subject to meeting certain amenity and access standards, however, the demolition of the existing structure was not considered acceptable as the building contained some interesting architectural features.

Therefore this application is now submitted for approval which retains the existing structure and provides an opportunity to sensitively convert the building whilst retaining the architectural detailing to the frontage. The extension to the side whilst very much subordinate affords an opportunity to make the whole scheme financially viable.

2.0 Uses

- 2.1 The Chapel was purchased approximately 15 years ago with a view to a possible residential conversion. However, due to the poor condition of the structure this was not viable at the time and since that time the downturn in the housing market suggested that the conversion and resultant available accommodation would not be a feasible solution, however, as the housing market has now improved it is considered that by providing an extension to form an additional 3 no. apartments along with the conversion of the present structure into 4 no. apartments will now make the potential conversion to residential a lot more viable.
- 2.2 The Trustees for Methodist Church sold this property on 25 January 1979, Planning Permission having been granted in November 1978 for use of the property (and that adjoining) as 'Builders Yard and Premises' ref no. SM5814. Since that time the premises have remained generally unused

albeit apart from occasional storage.

- 2.3 The applicant had previously considered potential conversion of the existing building for residential or mixed use purposes but had identified a number of problems with this option ie. the structural state of the present building. The badly spalled faces of the existing brickwork, the roof structure, which is badly leaking in places and the general unsatisfactory state of the walls and internal floors allied with the lack of onsite parking and the potential limited garden/amenity space that would be available, it was concluded that this was not a practical solution for the re-use of the building at that time and since then whilst the housing market had been subdued the premises have been marketed for sale for a period of at least four years however there has been little or no interest apart from one prospective purchaser who was considering its use as a garage and spray shop. This however never came to fruition.

It is therefore considered that a conversion would enable modern well-insulated structures to be constructed incorporating garden areas/car parking, yet all within walking distance of the town centre and a large supermarket recently constructed.

- 2.4 It is considered that the redevelopment of this 'Brownfield' site accords with preferred national planning policy of providing new housing on those sites, which will contribute to meeting the housing needs of the town without impacting upon any Greenfield sites.

- 2.5 Other uses had been considered but being just outside the main Biddulph Town Centre and no immediate parking facilities it was considered that only retail or commercial use would again not be a viable option and difficult to abstract any potential end users. Indeed the adjacent Mill building under partially the same ownership has been available for sale or rent but had also received virtually no interest.

- 2.6 In conclusion it is considered that although the site is just outside the Biddulph town centre area action plan it accords with the main aim of that plan and will contribute positively to the preferred aim of the regeneration of the town centre by providing attractive modern living units within a sustainable location whilst retaining a building of some local historical interest that is falling into disrepair and which in its present form is likely to remain unoccupied.

It is hoped that the conversion and extension will not only improve the visual appearance of the streetscene by removing the blockwork and timber boarding to the windows together with the overgrown land to the side and so when approaching the town centre from Station Road will also add a sense of vibrancy to the area.

Furthermore when considered with the potential residential redevelopment of the adjacent former Mill building would afford an opportunity to provide a coherent attractive redevelopment of this section of Station Road.

3.0 Amount

- 3.1 The existing building has a total footprint area of 220 sq m with the scheme suggesting that a couple of small outbuildings to the rear will be demolished whilst the extension will add a further 216 sq m over the three storeys.
- 3.2 The application site has a total area of 670 sqm which would comfortably accommodate an extension together with associated car parking, turning areas and private amenity area to the rear.

4.0 Layout

- 4.1 The submitted illustrative scheme layout has been very much influenced by the present building footprint, site constraints and the need to provide units of an adequate size whilst endeavouring to provide a shared amenity area, adequate off highway parking and turning facilities.
- 4.2 The building footprint of the proposed extension has been positioned to the right hand side of the existing building and set back behind the frontage in order to appear very much subordinate to the existing main building which will help retain the original historical character and integrity.
- 4.3 The internal layout has also been influenced by the present door and window positions and the existing recently converted former Sunday school premises to the left of the application site, which have also been converted to a residential use under planning approval ref. SMD/2012/0699 and to avoid impacting upon the residential amenity of this conversion the principal windows to the habitable rooms in the existing Chapel footprint have dictated the internal room layout in so far that the outlook is predominantly to the front and rear with only minimal outlook from the right hand side elevation, with the existing windows to the side being obscure glazed to avoid any overlooking.

The extension will also provide the principal windows to the habitable rooms to both the front and rear in order to achieve a reasonable outlook from these rooms and to avoid impacting on the buildings to the side.

5.0 Landscape

- 5.1 The general principles are described with the detailed landscaping proposals being agreed as a condition of any planning approval.
- 5.2 The existing building footprint covers the majority of the left hand side of the site with the rest of the site having become overgrown with weeds and small shrubs within a partially paved and hardcored size and rear yard.
- 5.3 The proposal seeks to provide a small area of soft landscaping to the frontage with a brick paved pedestrian and vehicular access whilst to the

rear it is suggested that there be a lawned and paved area to form a shared amenity area immediately behind the main block.

- 5.4 There will also be shrub and small tree planting to the periphery of the site to break up the harshness of the brick boundary walls and parking areas with a new vertically boarded timber panel fence to the left hand side rear boundary.

6.0 Scale

- 6.1 The proposal seeks to respond to the scale and form of the existing structure and has been deliberately recessed behind the front wall in order to appear subordinate and whilst the extension will incorporate three storeys the eaves and ridge height of the extension will still not exceed the height of the existing and therefore not detract from the historic style and character of the former Chapel.

7.0 Appearance

- 7.1 It is believed that the Chapel was built in the mid 19th century and is typical of many Chapel structures built around that period. There is a regular window fenestration to the front elevation with attractive arch headed brick detailing to the doors and windows. There is a traditional blue grey tiling to the roof.

- 7.2 The materials and detailing selected on the extension are proposed to respond to some of the Victorian features found both on the former Chapel and elsewhere in the town.

The proposal aims to respond positively to its historic context and set a benchmark for sensitive interventions in the future. Overall it is hoped that the proposal will be a good neighbour seeking to raise the quality of the area whilst politely respecting its context, perhaps incorporating modern architectural features.

- 7.3 To the rear of the site there are fairly modern traditional residential properties.

- 7.4 It is for this reason that a residential use is considered appropriate for the area as a commercial/light industrial use is likely to cause amenity problems/issues for all the adjacent residential properties.

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 The existing premises lack any onsite parking and the proposal suggests how 7 no. car spaces could be contained within the site – situated to the right hand side and to the rear to suit the building footprint. This is considered to be adequate for a development of this scale and would alleviate any parking pressures on Station Road.

9.0 Ecological/Environmental Issues

- 9.1 In response to a request from the local authority for the first application ref. 10/00558/OUT a survey for Bats was undertaken.

As identified in the report dated September 2010 evidence of Bat droppings were found in the adjacent Mill.

There were also droppings found in the adjacent Chapel of both Long Eared and Pipistrelle Bats together with Moth Wings.

- 9.2 This initial survey established that the Mill offered potential of roosting for Bats whilst the Chapel was used for roosting purposes.

Following these initial findings discussions were held with Mr Mark Preece the Council’s Countryside Officer and it was determined that an emergence survey would be required to determine whether the buildings could be used as a maternity roost and that this would need to coincide with the core maternity roosting season between May and September.

This was undertaken and the findings were stated in the report dated October 2011.

- 9.3 In brief the results suggested that the two species of Bat used the buildings for roosting purposes (Long Eared and Pipistrelle) more so in the Chapel than the Mill.

- 9.4 The recommendations of the report suggest the following:-

As mitigation for the demolitions of the existing building an alternative roosting provision would need to be designed into the roof structure on the Chapel site, this would need to include features suitable for both types of Bat to allow continued use of the sites.

These would need to include an uncluttered roof void minimum dimensions of 5 x 5 m x 2.8 m high.

Access to the roof void would need to be included in appropriate locations

such as below ridge tiles and gaps between underfelt and ties, also the use of having tiles and/or wood cladding on external walls, access into any soffit boxes that may be a design point – gaps in gable walls and discrete commercial Bat boxes.

9.5 It may also be necessary to construct a temporary roosting structure prior to any building works, this could be positioned to the rear of the site, this would be available for use between the time the buildings are being converted and the replacement roosting installed in the new building. This would provide continued roost availability on site,.

9.6 The exact size and construction of this structure would need to be conditioned as part of any outline planning approval together with the formation of a suitable sized Bat roosting void in the new building.

As previously the precise details (incorporating advice from Natural England) showing dimensions/conservation materials etc would be conditioned as part of any planning approval.

9.7 Noise Issues

As a matter of course all new buildings have to reach a certain level of sound insulation between dwellings (and car parking areas) to comply with Part 'E' of the Building Regulations and new buildings and conversions will need to have a 'pre-completion' sound test to ensure compliance.

9.8 The existing adjacent Mill premises are currently vacant and being used for storage purposes whilst the former Sunday school building has also been converted to residential use.

As there are predominantly residential properties surrounding the site it is considered that there are no external noise issues.

9.9 Vehicular traffic utilising Station Road has decreased greatly since the completion of the Biddulph By-pass which has again greatly reduced noise levels for residents.

It is therefore suggested that any noise /sound insulation would be as required under normal building regulation requirements..