

DESIGN ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR

PROPOSED REMODELLING AND EXTENSION

OF

24, MARKET PLACE, SPALDING

FOR
Mr. A. Laxmidhar

Job No A2602
January 2015

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PROPOSED MODELLING AND EXTENSION

AT

**24, MARKET PLACE
SPALDING
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1.0 The Site

- 1.1 24, Market Place, Spalding is an early Georgian, 4 storey house on the south east end of Spalding Market place. A local authority community building, The South Holland Centre, built in 1978 to replace the old Corn Exchange, abuts 24, Market Place on its north eastern elevation and a shop, No 25 (Curtis's), abuts it on its south western elevation. The ground floor of 24, Market Place has been used as a news agency for in excess of 55 years, and it was known to have been used by a local printer before this. The original Georgian building which sits under a slate roof with a long "catslide" to the rear has a flat roofed, single storey extension to the rear of the original building. Above the ground floor shop accommodation there are three of relatively little used accommodation.
- 1.2 The upper floors of the property are, however, because of the narrowness of the plot, sterilized by their shape and the size of the plot. The plot is only 4.25 metres wide (including external walls), and it stretches back some 30 metres from the frontage with the Market Place. As a result of this shape there is no practical way of providing a separate access/exit to the accommodation above the shop within the constraints of the existing site, without compromising the viability of the shop, especially since The Market Place is the only public highway to which access can be gained. The South Holland Centre was constructed tight up against the north eastern side of the shop and wraps around the south eastern side of the site by way of a galvanised fire escape stair over a small yard, ultimately discharging onto Double Street. Shops in Bridge Street and to the south east of No 24 have built up to the south east boundary of the site and have effectively built over any historic circulation routes to the rear of premises in this area of the town.



South Holland Centre fire escape stair from flat roof to rear of 24, Market place

South Holland Centre fire escape stair from

- 1.3 The only access to the property is, therefore, the existing shop door which opens off Market Place and, as a result of the difficulties in accessing the floors above the shop from anywhere other than the shop, these upper floors have only ever been used for storage by the shop. There is a second door, however, located on the north east elevation, towards the rear of the flat roof section of the shop, but the construction of The South Holland Centre has sealed off this access. Old Ordnance Survey plans of this area of Spalding show that there was, at the beginning of the C20, a network of passages to the rear of the shop, all of which are now built over, but which originally led out to Bridge Street or Double Street.

2.0 The Building

- 2.1 No 24, Market Place, Spalding is identified on the Lincolnshire Register of Listed Buildings as a Grade II Listed Building. It was listed on 20th November 1975 with an ID No. 197339. It is identified as being part of a group, with Nos 25 & 26, but No. 24 is described as:- *C18 or early C19. 4 storeys in brick with Welsh slate roof. 1 window each to top 2 floors, in surrounds with cills on tablets, modern glazing, band at cills. Canted bay on ground (first) floor. Modern shop front.* The shopfront was replaced with a new period (Georgian style) shopfront in 2013 (Listed Planning permission ref. H16-0858-09, dated 16th February 2010). This shopfront was designed to copy the shopfront that was present in the early 1900's and as illustrated by contemporary photographs and, at the



24, Market Place Spalding with new shopfront

same time the casements fitted in the bay and 2 other windows above, were replaced with units replicating those shown on the photographs. The shop interior and fittings at ground floor level are not representative of the original premises, and it is clear that the

original staircase was removed when the single storey extension was installed and a new stair was installed from that (rear) part of the shop up to the rearmost, first floor room of the original building. In the absence of any “period” staircase from the first floor to the second, it is clear that the existing C20 stair is also a replacement as this, too, is not in its original position, there being evidence of doors and partitions being removed around it. The stair from second to third floor, however, is clearly original and many of the doors, windows, architraves and skirtings appear to be original, although damaged. Much of the plasterwork in these three floors also appears to be original having a wooden lath base, but again significant areas of the plasterwork has now been damaged by movement and water ingress.

- 2.2 At third floor level there is a single room overlooking the Market Place, behind which there is a smaller room, with window overlooking the backyard of No 25 and an access to a roof void.
- 2.3 The second floor has a lobby area in the vicinity of the staircases which leads to a single large room under the two rooms at third floor level. There is then another room to the south east of the stair lobby leading to another large roof void.
- 2.4 At first floor level, there are basically two large rooms only with the stair to the second floor being accessible from the front room where there is also evidence of partitions being removed. The new ground/first staircase links the rearmost of the two rooms at this level, which has been fitted with a modern steel window, to the back of the flat roofed shop extension, as well as giving access to the flat roof for maintenance.
- 2.5 Within this rear room (above), there is an access trap set in the floor which when opened reveals a void space above a pair of small offices which can only be accessed from No 25 Market Place. This feature is believed to be evidence of a much earlier building on the site, but unfortunately it splits the shop space of No 24 into two distinct areas, the rearmost (and largest) area receiving natural light from rooflights in the flat roof and the old shop with access to the Market Place. The rear part of the shop also leads to a small staff and storage facility which is located immediately adjacent to the fire escape stair described at 1.2 above.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal for these premises is that the top three floors be converted into an extensive, self-contained, two bedroom flat.
- 3.2 In order to make this conversion, the following actions are required:-
 - i) The upper three floors of the property will require extensive refitting with new partitions, doors etc and some new windows (all to the side or rear of the premises),
 - ii) Whilst retaining the existing period stair between the second and third floors, a new stair will be fitted between the first and second floors to a period design,
 - iii) Approximately 6.5 metres of the rear of the flat roofed section of the shop will require removing and separating from the shop with a solid wall. This area will be replaced with a new staff facilities area and an external yard. The roof above the staff facilities will be an external terrace area for the new flat.

- iv) A new first floor extension will then be constructed over the remains of the existing flat roofed part of the shop in order to provide additional accommodation for the flat, including a lobby with door to the terrace,
- v) The large room at first floor level (rear) of the existing accommodation will be converted to kitchen/dining space with corridor from the new entrance to a new stair lobby. The remainder (front) of the first floor will be partitioned off to form a large (6m x 4m) living room.
- vi) At second and third floor levels existing rooms will be converted to bedroom and bathroom space with generous storage areas in the voids under the “catslide” roof.
- vii) The South Holland Centre fire escape stair will be altered in accordance with the agreement dated 06/06/2014, to facilitate access to Double Street from the flat and the shop without compromising the security of the South Holland Centre or the safety of the centre’s staff and visitors. Access to the stair will require a short flight of steps down from the terrace at 3.2 iii) onto the first (replanned) half landing of the fire stair, and access from the rear of the shop will be achieved via a stair to the same half landing from the new back door of the shop.

4.0 **Design Access Criteria**

- 4.1 **Use** The existing accommodation is currently largely vacant although some new supplies as well as the remains of old display equipment are stored there. The ground floor will remain as retail space, but the accommodation on the upper three floors will be converted to residential which is what the accommodation was originally provided for.
- 4.2 **Amount** The main difficulty that this shop has had to face is the difficulty in identifying whether the upper three storeys of the premises could ever be usefully employed. These areas, currently used as storage, are far larger than required for an operation such as this and because of the difficulties identified at 1.2 above no use could be entertained where an independent access was required. Residential use can only be implemented if a separate access can be provided which allows the occupant independent access to street level. The proposal, in fact, permits this latter requirement and whilst an extension of some 63 cubic metres is proposed, 42 cubic metres are to be removed. This means the volume of the building will only increase by approx. 4.2%.
- 4.3 **Layout** The basic layout of the premises remains unaltered. The proposed flat will have sleeping on upper floors with living on the lower level.
- 4.4 **Scale** The design proposed is framed within the same basic plan and form of the existing building and therefore the scale will not be altered. The alterations will not be visible from the public highway.
- 4.5 **Landscaping** The opportunity does not exist for any landscaping. The site is a town centre site abutted by buildings on three sides and the Market Place on the fourth side.
- 4.6 **Appearance** As intimated at 4.4, the alterations proposed are not visible from the public domain and to the rear the element of new extension largely stands in lieu of the existing staircase cabin. Appearance therefore, to all intents and purposes. doesn’t change.

- 4.7 **Access** Access to the upper floors has always been a difficult issue and the proposal put forward here allows the construction of a new access to the site via the South Holland Centre fire escape to Double Street. This access will give independent access to the proposed flat, a secondary access to the rear of the shop and the existing access arrangements to the South Holland centre will remain with increased security and safety provisions being built in. The current access onto Double Street is the fire exit for the centre but also acts as a delivery point to the Stage Door of the centre. These facilities will be maintained whilst giving the proposed access to the flat and the rear of the shop.

5.0 **Discussion**

- 5.1 These proposals were subjected to a Full Planning Application and a Listed Building Application on 27th August 2009, (Refs H16-0584-09 and H16-0585-09) made on behalf of the previous owner of the site. Both applications were granted, the first on 5th March 2010 and the second on 16th February 2010. Both permissions were issued with the usual “three year” condition and during the processing of the applications, the feasibility of the shared use of the South Holland fire escape was further investigated by the Planning Department.
- 5.2 It was indicated that the use of the fire escape would require a legal agreement being drawn up between the Council and the shop owner and after extended negotiation, a formal proposal was put to the Council in April 2013 indicating the proposed alterations to the staircase and giving an indications of how it was envisaged the practical issues would be solved. Compromises were suggested on three levels:-
- i) Access had to be permitted to the shop and flat at all times,
 - ii) The security of The South Holland centre had to be maintained at all times, (as well as to the shop/flat premises, and
 - iii) There had to be continued use of the whole of the area at the base of the stairs as well as of the stairs themselves. This proposal was agreed and a document has now been jointly signed by both the Council and the shop owner. (Right of Way agreement dated 06/06/2014).
- 5.3 In June 2013, the client was advised that the three year condition period given on the two Planning Permissions received, had expired and therefore a new application would need to be made. This application is therefore to renew those permissions in order to permit work to begin and the conditions of the agreement to be complied with.
- 5.4 Whilst this building is Listed as Grade II, serious neglect through the years, together with the inability to turn vacant space into useful accommodation has left a dire need to preserve this building. It has been identified that the owners do not want the space for their own (living) accommodation and equally the amount of space is excessive for the requirements of the business. Because of the lack of an independent access to the upper storey accommodation, the owners have been unable to use it for anything but casual storage in association with the shop.
- 5.5 To provide the necessary independent access through the existing shop would seriously impede the operations of the shop, given the narrowness of the site and the intrusion of the rooms only accessible from No 25. However, the safety of existing retail operations is seriously compromised by the lack of a rear (fire) exit. The rear of the shop is fully 30

metres from the front door and any fire incident at the front of the shop could have serious consequences, the only available alternative escape being to access the flat roof and thereby reach adjacent roofs of adjacent property. Access to the half landings of the adjacent South Holland fire escape is impossible at this stage because of anti-bird meshing which has been wrapped around the stair and access onto any other roof is questionable because of the unknown nature of the construction of those roofs.

- 5.6 Negotiations with the management of the South Holland Centre and South Holland District Council have now identified that it is possible to redesign the rear of the shop and the existing fire escape to create a (*much needed*) yard for the shop with storage for refuse and to give this yard an access to the public highway (Broad Street) via the first half landing of the existing centre fire escape. In doing this an independent access can be facilitated to all accommodation above the shop. Some modifications to the fire stair are therefore envisaged, but these alterations will maintain the security of the South Holland Centre and still give the shop, and proposed flat, access to Double Street. In making the physical alterations, the existing gate to Double Street will be moved nearer to the street, thus reducing the depth of the alleyway of that street and it is proposed that the access controls currently existing will be modified to allow exit for all, but will be set up to only allow access into specific areas by allocated keys or key cards. A fire alarm system is proposed within the shop that will interlink with the system in the centre and with the flat to ensure full evacuation from all premises in the eventuality of an alarm.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposals advanced by this application have a long history which has necessitated the agreement by the owners of the adjacent community building to some alterations to the fire escape to the rear of that building in order that the long term future of 24, Market Place, Spalding can be secured. This property has been a newsagent for a considerable time now and it is only within the last 40 years that an adjacent building, The Spalding Corn Exchange was demolished and replaced with the South Holland Centre. It is this latter building which has effectively sealed off a secondary access to the shop. Without this secondary access, the use of the upper floors of 24, Market Place as anything other than storage for the shop is strictly illegal unless another access to the public highway can be secured.
- 6.2 The South Holland centre was constructed in 1978 when perhaps the then owner of the shop was not intending to propose any other use of the property and possibly the need for a secondary entrance to the premises was not realised or even needed by legislation.
- 6.3 The premises changed hands, after the construction of The South Holland Centre, but continued as a newsagent and the applications made in August 2009 were submitted on behalf of this new owner and were then approved in 2010. However, even though the planning process at that time identified the need of a legal agreement between the council and the shop keeper, the shop keeper sold the premises to another party and it is this owner who has determined that he wants to make the alterations that were conceived by his predecessor. The shopfront and windows, which were originally conceived by the earlier owner, were carried out in 2013 and the shop keeper then entered into negotiations with the Council regarding the shared use of the fire escape.

- This matter was not settled until 2014 when it was realised that the original three year condition of the 2010 Planning Permissions had expired.
- 6.4 The applications to which this document relates are therefore that the original Planning Permission be renewed in order that the owner can commence work, initially on the fire escape and the rear part of the shop before then making the conversion of the upper floors so that he can comply with a time constraint set down in the Right of Way Agreement.