

**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT  
CAB PHASE II**



**for**

**THE REFURBISHMENT & REMODELLING OF GROUND  
FLOOR OFFICES & THE CONVERSION OF FIRST FLOOR  
OFFICES TO CREATE A SINGLE RESIDENTIAL DWELLING,  
TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL WORKS**

**at**

**1 PRIORY ROAD (part former CAB Offices)  
SPALDING  
LINCOLNSHIRE**

**for**

**GCM ADAMS 2007 SETTLEMENT TRUST**

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**PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE (FOR FINAL COMMENT)**

## **Application Summary**

- The proposal seeks Full Planning Approval for the refurbishment of the ground floor offices and the change of use of the vacant first floor offices to a residential flat at 1 Priory Road, Spalding. The proposals involve external alterations.
- The application site stands within the town centre but the upper floor offices have been disused since being vacated by the Citizens Advice Bureau some years ago. As a result the upper floor areas have fallen in to a state of disrepair and the building fabric is now suffering weather ingress.
- The proposal seeks to refurbish and upgrade the ground floor office areas to provide open plan office space with ancillary staff changing and mess facilities that will continue to serve both the office and adjacent factory staff but in a more efficient manner.
- The building is believed to have been a terrace of houses when first constructed in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The terraced units were, over time, knocked in to one and the residential use was lost to commercial occupation. Such use has itself now reached the end of its natural lifespan and a return to residential use now appears appropriate. This is particularly relevant given the increased population of the town and the demand for rented living spaces.
- The upper floor of the building is of sufficient size and scale to accommodate a single residential flat without need for extension or dramatic intervention.
- The formation of a flat at first floor level will justify the reinstatement of a traditional pitched roof which will do much to improve the buildings rather unattractive exterior. This will contribute positively to the streetscene and to the wider context generally.
- Overall it is considered that the building presents a good opportunity for refurbishment and conversion and the use of the upper floor as a private dwelling will be sympathetic to the surrounding sites.
- An area for waste and recycling storage has been indicated on the plans. This would be convenient for road side collection.

## Site observation and analysis

### Location

The site is located in the town centre of Spalding, Lincolnshire and is the property known as 1 Priory Road, Spalding. The ground floor is currently owned by GCM Adams 2007 Trust and used as offices and the first floor was formerly occupied by the Citizen's Advice Bureau but is now unoccupied. The ground floor office area is approximately 147m<sup>2</sup> and the first floor area is approximately 85m<sup>2</sup>. The principle elevation of the works fronts Priory Road. The location is identified within figure 01 below.

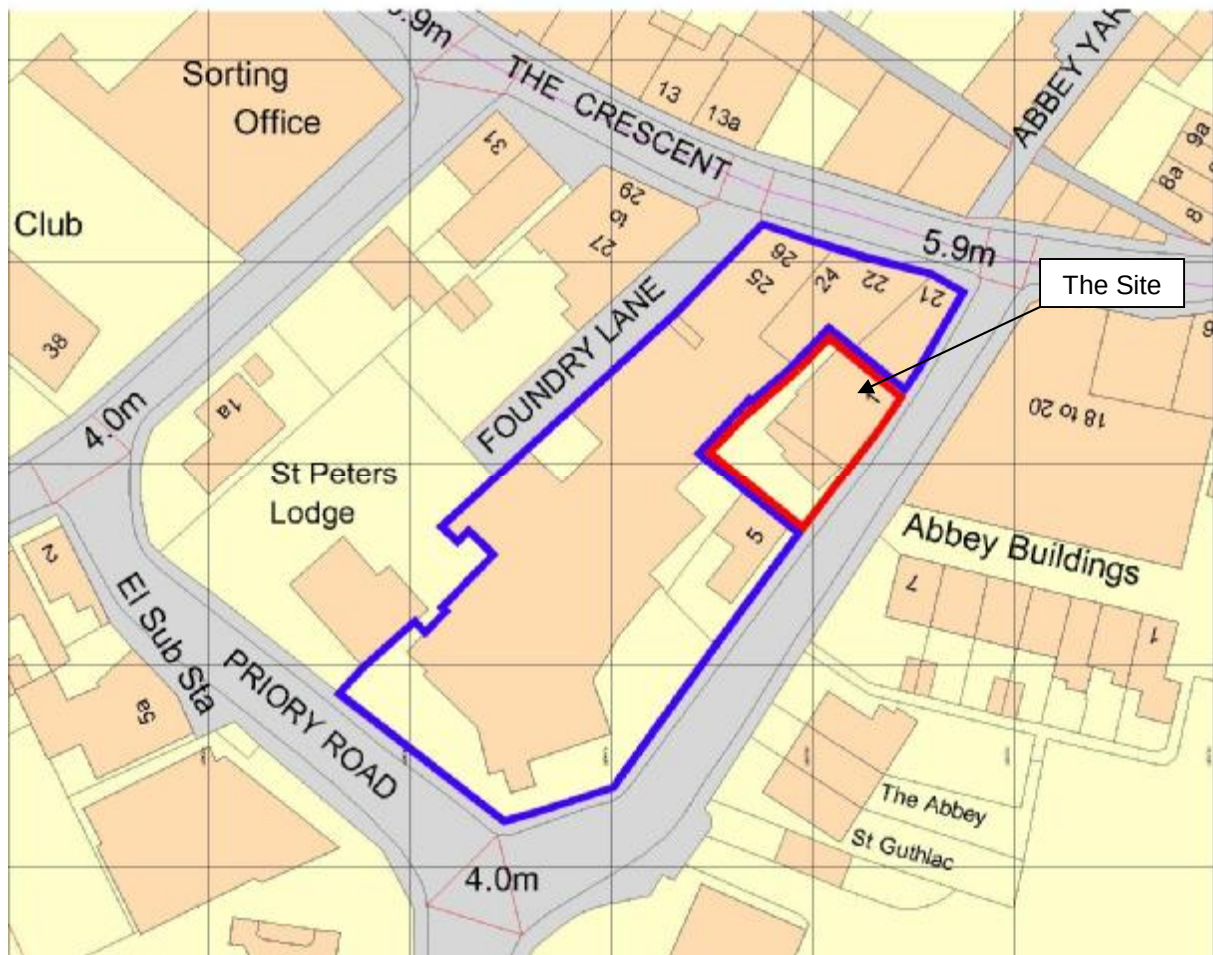


Fig. 01 – Site Location Plan

### Site description

The site comprises both floor levels of number 1 Priory Road. The ground floor is currently used as office space by Adams (Butchers). The first floor area was previously occupied as part of the CAB Offices but was vacated some time ago and remains unoccupied to this day. The remainder of the first floor offices previously used by the CAB (to the immediate north of the site) were converted to 4no. residential dwellings in 2016.

There are 2 specific elements to this application, the refurbishment of the existing offices to the ground floor of 1 Priory Road and the conversion of the former CAB offices to a single residential unit at first floor level. The elements which have a planning impact comprise of the following: -

1. The ground floor area is essentially an open plan office space which fronts Priory Road with ancillary accommodation to the side and rear comprising of a meeting room, office, kitchen, rest room and toilets / changing rooms. The ground floor, currently the main office space, is accessed from Priory Road, there is also a secondary rear access which has a covered link (roof only) and is used to access the rear of the butchers shop fronting The Crescent. The ancillary accommodation is used by both office staff and the factory staff via the rear access door. The rear ancillary accommodation seems to be a later addition to the main building, is single storey and finished with a flat roof. The office is located adjacent to the Sue Ryder charity shop. The frontage to Priory Road is a mixture of brickwork and render and has timber windows of varying sizes and arrangements. Some of the windows and doors have arched brickwork heads. The side elevation is rendered and the rear elevation is brickwork. The majority of windows are timber with a few metal framed windows to the rear. All windows and doors are fairly standard with little architectural merit. There is a single storey lean-to roof at the rear of the building and adjacent to the ancillary accommodation, this houses the staircase which leads to the first floor (refer to item 2 for the first floor) and again has a render finish with a slate roof.
2. The first floor, as the ground floor, is generally an open plan office, with a separate office and kitchen, which is located directly above the ground floor office and fronts Priory Road. Ancillary accommodation is located to the side elevation comprising of the access stair and toilets. The first floor was formerly occupied by the CAB but is now vacant. The stair on the side elevation is the only access to the first floor. Again the front elevation is a mixture of render and brickwork with timber windows of varying sizes and arrangements. The side elevation is rendered and the rear brickwork. Again all windows and doors are fairly standard with little architectural merit. The main roof over the open plan off / separate office / kitchen is flat and is in poor condition with evidence of water ingress and damage on the internal ceilings. Some of the ceiling finishes have come down due to water damage. The roof over the side section which accommodates the stairs and toilets is pitched roof (front to back) with asbestos sheeting roof covering.



Fig. 02 – View from Priory Road towards The Crescent



Fig. 03 – View from Priory Road towards The Crescent



Fig. 04 – View from The Crescent



Fig. 05 – View from Priory Road



Fig. 06 – Side elevation taken from Priory Road



Fig. 07 – Side / rear elevation taken from rear courtyard

### Site boundaries

The overall site is defined on figure 01 above.

The application site is defined by the public footpath to Priory Road with forms the front elevation to the south east of the site.

The remainder of the site is enclosed by the surrounding buildings and a courtyard area which is used to access the rear entrances of the adjacent buildings.

### Neighbouring Development

Outside of the site boundaries, built form in this area comprises relatively high density urban development. The majority of buildings in the immediate locality of the site are in retail use, at least at ground floor level. To the east of the site land use is mainly retail in nature. To the south stands a largely disused hospital beyond which residential development dominates. To the west there is a children's nursery and residential dwellings. To the north development is mainly either retail or commercial in nature. In general, the site sits at that point in the town where 'use' is changing from retail / commercial to residential.

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MARCH 2017

### Existing access arrangements

The ground floor offices can be accessed either directly from Priory Road (pedestrian only) or via the rear courtyard which has vehicular access from Priory Road.

The first floor former officer space originally had 2 points of access one from The Crescent and the second from the aforementioned courtyard entrance to the side elevation. The entrance from the Crescent has since been blocked off with the Phase I conversion works. The side access still remains.

### Streetscape / planting

The site is fully developed and as such presents a relatively hard' urban appearance where the street-scene is entirely defined by the building facades. Soft landscaping in this area is limited to a small area of planting to the immediate south of number 5 Priory Road.

### Amenities

The site sits in the centre of Spalding and is therefore very close to all amenities and the public transport network.

### Views into and through the site

Since the building essentially fills the site there are no significant views either into or through this site at pedestrian level.

### Views out from the site

Views out from the site are limited generally to the buildings directly opposite. There is however a partial view to the Parish Church spire to the East beyond the Abbey Buildings.

### Context - Physical

Development on the overall 'site' comprises a series of abutting, two storey buildings that have, over time, become a single, irregular block. This is typical of development within the town centre.

Overall, the method of construction and appearance of buildings in the immediate vicinity on this site are typical of town centre buildings from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

Outside the building the external spaces are used to accommodate bin storage and general circulation.

### Context - Social

The building complex of which the proposed development areas form a part comprise mostly retail units / offices at ground floor level with unoccupied offices above and the newly converted 4 residential units. This is part of the town centre development and as such it has the expected impact on any neighbouring properties as a result of its physical form.

On a wider scale the site is part of the town centre which offers a mixture of retail units, offices and residential dwellings and its contribution is therefore mixed. It is unlikely that the

areas of the site proposed for redevelopment would be the focus of aspirations for local people in respect of anything.

#### Context – Economic

No changes in use are proposed to the existing occupied offices at ground floor level on this site generally. The proposal does include for the alterations of the internal space at ground floor level to provide a more efficient space for the current occupiers. The first floor offices have been unoccupied for a considerable period of time. At present therefore the upper floor area is making no economic contribution to the town.

## **Historical Context: Regressive map study**

The town of Spalding was sited so as to take greatest advantage of the River Welland. The river was navigable and the area in which Spalding stands was at a crossing point, an area of higher land between the fens and the marshes. The town became an important port and as such much of the early development was centred near the river where Double Street is now. The first area developed was the land between the River Welland, the River Westlode and the north-east wall of the Priory. This remains the core of the commercial area to this day and contains the Market Place and almost all of the major trading areas. The medieval Benedictine Priory dominated early development. It was established on a large site close to the west bank of the river.

The Priory Road site stands slightly to the west of the main historic commercial core of the town and it appears that this did not become developed until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. The earliest known map of the town was that produced in 1732 by John Grundy of Congelton, Leicestershire. This was presented to the Spalding Gentlemen's Society.

Although this plan shows a curved feature running almost parallel and to the west of the Market Place it is not formally identified as the Crescent at this stage. This 'route' appears to link the Sheep Market with the Abbey yard and as such may fall somewhere between the current line of Abbey Path and the Crescent. It is clear that at the time of production of this map, there was little development within the area of the site. There appear to have been a number of fields within the vicinity, the land where the site now stands is marked as 'Sir John Oldfield's Heirs'. The land around the Priory (now to the rear of the 'Bookmark') is indicated as being heavily planted.



## Plan of 1842

The Crescent is identified on a 'Plan of Lands in the Abbey Yard, Spalding' which was produced in 1842 (a copy of which is reproduced in 'Aspects of Spalding 1790-1930'). This map identifies the proposed streets and allotments for sale at that time. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary it is assumed that there were still no buildings on the land at this time. On this map, the Sessions House is identified, along with the Gaol and Gaol Yard (now the site of Hughes Electrical Shop and Spalding Library respectively) at the Sheep Market end of the Crescent. The 'Old Priory' is also identified, a section of which still exists immediately behind the current 'Bookmark' store. Plots along the north-east side of the Crescent are identified as long narrow strips that run from the road edge back to a rear passage (now the Abbey Path). The area to the south-west of the Crescent (occupied by the site) is divided into a number of plots fronting the Crescent. In the area of the site the land is divided into single depth plots which abut plots perpendicular accessed from the sides. Widths are given as between 20 and 23 feet with depths between 61 and 72 feet. The plan identifies two 'Main streets' each 20 feet in width and three minor passageways (Back Occupation Road) each 10 feet wide running perpendicular to the Crescent. The map also identifies a 'Proposed Road to Thomazine Lane' (St. Thomas's Road) running from the end of the main street nearest the Sessions House. This may be the route that since 1871 has been known as Spring Gardens (formerly known as 'Brett Walk' named after its only inhabitant at that time). Should this be the case then it may also be that the minor access identified on the plan could be the current Foundry Lane.

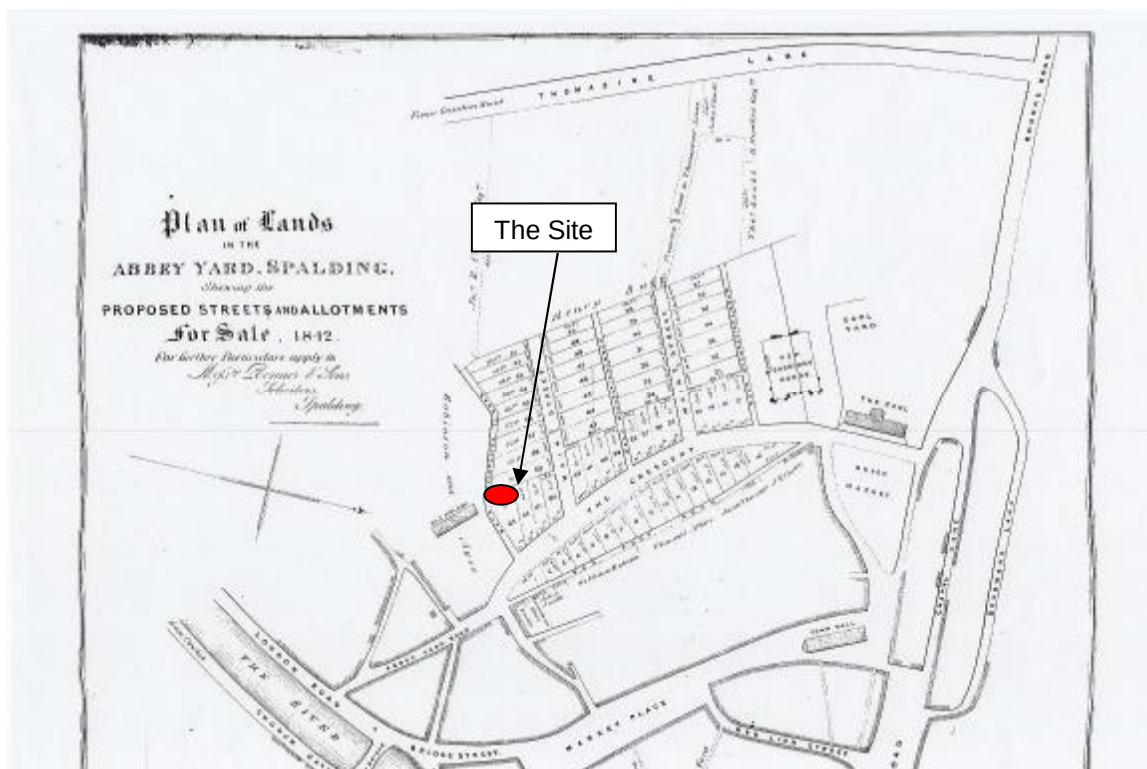


Fig. 07 – The Plan of 1842

## Plan of 1887

This plan indicates the Crescent as a well-developed street. It is documented (by Michael Elsdon) that the Crescent was constructed in 1843. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that there was much development in this area of town in the 34 years that followed. By 1887 the Abbey Path is clearly defined and all of the buildings along the north and south sides of the Crescent, including on this site, are developed. Foundry Lane is also shown and again this appears to be developed fully along its east side (dwellings). Priory Road is clearly shown and the area where this site stands is fully developed, though it is not clear how much of what now exists actually dates from that era. It is however likely that the terraced format indicated on the map is the basis of the building plan that exists today. To the south-west of the site St. Peter's Lodge stands in open grounds.

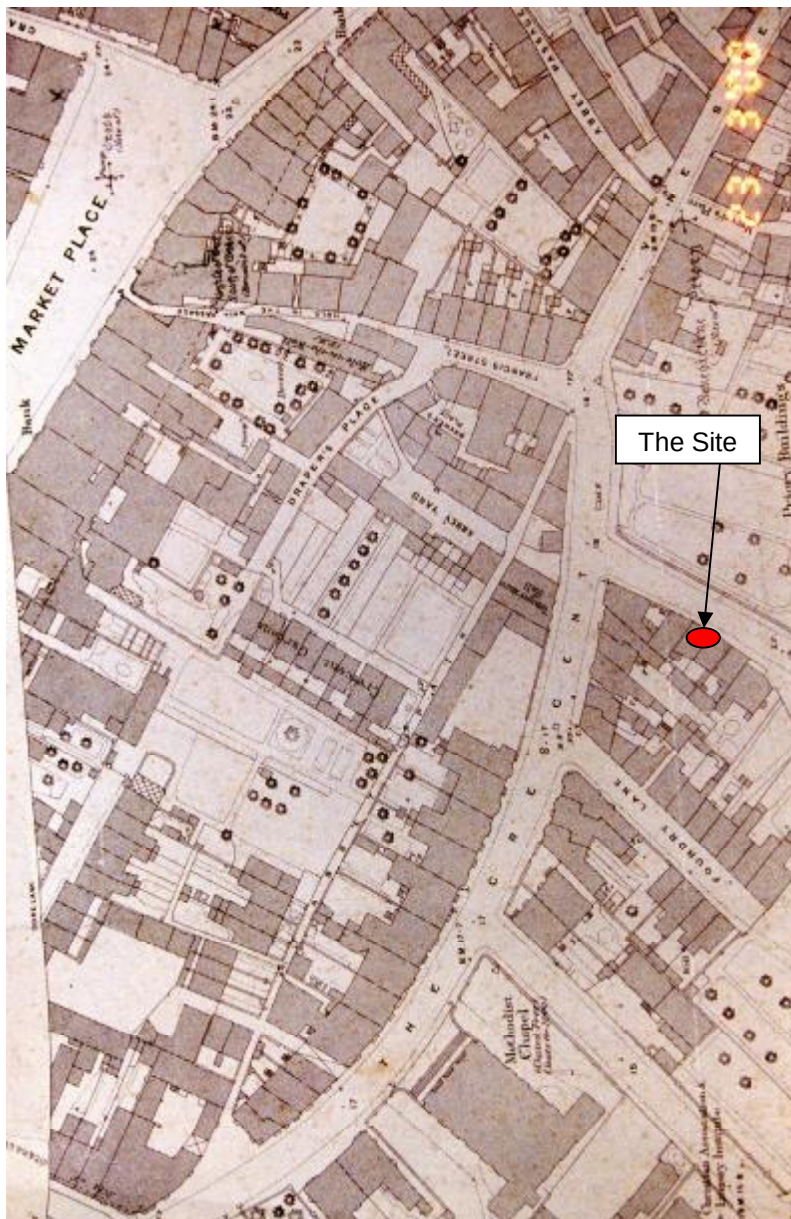


Fig. 8 – The Map of 1887

By the time that this map was produced the entire area of the town was developed though the map does not provide sufficient detail to permit detailed analysis.

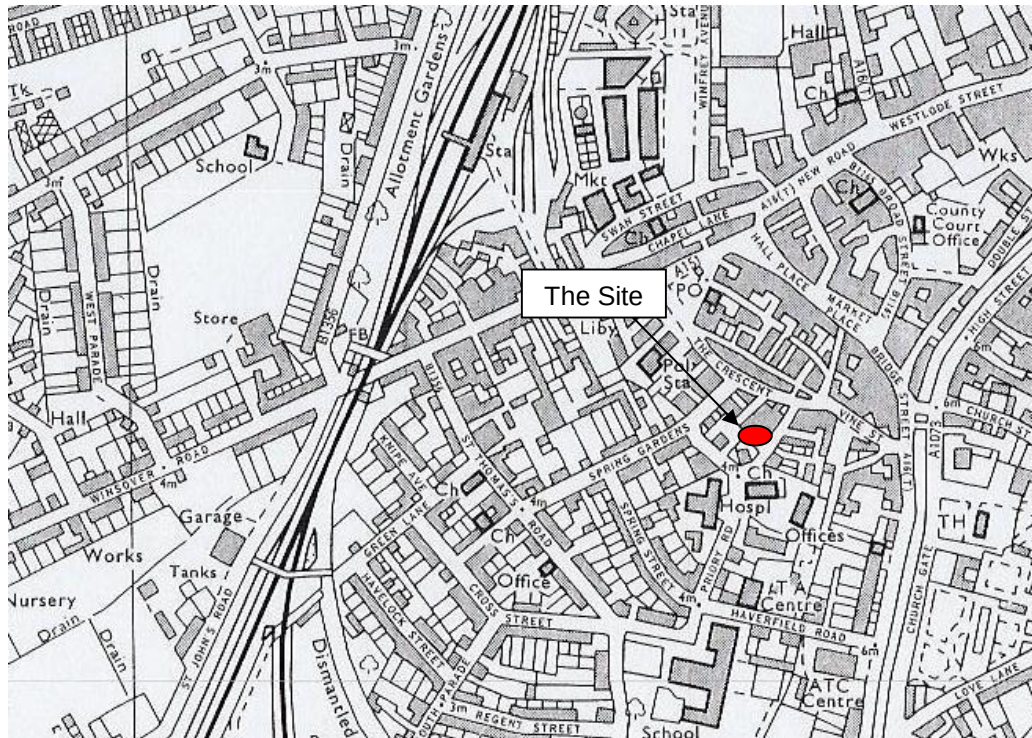


Fig. 9 – Ordnance Survey Plan of 1973

In summary it is clear that the area occupied by the site was considered for development as early as 1842 but that it was undeveloped at that time. The 1887 map shows the site almost fully developed by then indicating a development date of between 1843 and 1887. Since then it is likely that the original buildings have been either demolished or changed in many cases beyond clear recognition.

During the production of this report no photographic evidence was found showing the earlier development of this site.

## **Site Evaluation**

Details of the site and general context have been recorded and analysed within the site observation and analysis above. From those findings the following key statements are identified.

1. The first floor office space has been unoccupied for a number of years. The recent conversion of the majority of the first floor office space to residential units has been undertaken sensitively, conversion of the remainder of the first floor office space to residential use could have a positive impact on the area.
2. The external appearance of the ground and first floor area are not considered to be of any value in terms of historic or architectural importance. External alterations to these elements would not therefore result in the loss of fabric of value and provided the design is appropriate the alterations could be of positive impact.
3. The existing ground floor offices are tired in appearance and the internal layout is inefficient. Again it is considered that the remodelling works would improve the working environment without detriment to the building.

## **Design Statement**

The following section demonstrates how the conceptual approach has taken account of the identified physical, social and economic context set against development plan policies for design.

### **Use**

As previously stated, the applicant is proposing to refurbish the existing offices at ground floor level, office use is to remain. The applicant also seeks to gain approval for the conversion of the disused first floor office accommodation to a residential apartment. The proposed alterations to the ground floor level will create a more efficient space to meet the needs of the current and possible future occupiers. It is believed that the first floor level was originally in residential use before it was converted to offices. Its conversion back to residential use now appears appropriate. Since the site is in an area where other residential development has been permitted in recent years it is considered that this use is appropriate for this location. This is also supported with the recently completed conversion of Phase I of the first floor from former offices to 4 residential units.

### **Amount**

The proposals here relate only to the reuse of areas that already exist. 'Amount' is therefore not seen as being relevant,

### **Layout**

The areas proposed for alteration suit the revised use well. Their layout is logical.

### **Scale**

Again the proposals here relate only to the reuse of areas that already exist. 'Scale' is therefore not seen as being relevant,

### **Landscaping**

The proposals have no impact on landscaping.

### **Appearance**

It is proposed to replace the existing doors and windows to the Priory Road elevation with new, the existing openings are to remain.

It is proposed to remove the most of the existing flat roof of the two storey section fronting Priory Road and re-instate a pitched roof which is more in keeping with the area. The existing asbestos roof sheeting is to be removed from the end section of the building and the whole two storey section finished in slate roof tiles. This, it is believed, will result in a considerable improvement in the building's appearance. The reinstatement of a pitched roof form will add to the local roofscape in a positive way.

### **Access Statement:**

The site is located in Spalding town centre with easy access to all amenities. The site is therefore considered sustainable. The proposals here do not impact upon this.

Access to the office and residential unit will be via a single pedestrian door on the Priors Road elevation at the west end section. This will be the only access to the first floor. The office will have a secondary access to the rear of the building. The residential unit will have its own stair access.

Aside from the above the extant structure imposes restrictions to access that cannot easily be circumnavigated and must therefore be accepted as being a consequence of revitalizing older building stock.

### **Sustainable Construction Statement:**

The site location is considered relatively sustainable as it is close to amenities as well as a bus route. In addition the proposal seeks to reutilize disused commercial space which is in line with the Government's ethos of prioritizing brownfield site development and extant structure conversion to address a recognized housing need.

### **Demolition Statement:**

The conversion of the building requires internal demolition but little of substance. This is not considered significant on this site.

### **Planning Statement:**

The application proposal is to undertake general refurbishment and for change the use of the vacant offices to a residential dwelling.

Relating specifically to the change of use the author would draw attention to the publication produced in July 2012 by the Department for Communities and Local Government entitled 'Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential'. Whilst it is acknowledged that this site may not fit all criteria in respect of Permitted Development Rights etc, the general issues raised by the report and its overriding ethos in respect of the reutilization of existing building stock remain entirely appropriate. We would specifically repeat here text from the report introduction which appears relevant for this site:

1. 'It is accepted that there is an urgent need to increase the rate of house-building in England and make housing supply more responsive to changes in demand. For decades house-building in England has failed to keep up with the needs and aspirations of our growing population.'
2. The Government believes that there is an opportunity to contribute to increasing the housing supply by recognizing the scope for allowing changes of use of buildings from commercial to residential to take place more easily.'
3. We recognise that there are buildings which no longer function as intended in their existing locations. There are offices built in locations where the demand for office space has moved on or the need is for buildings with higher specifications that are better able to deliver for modern businesses. Similarly, there are industrial buildings

which are no longer suitable for manufacturing which have struggled to find new uses but which offer good opportunities for conversion.'

4. 'All such changes in use contribute to the Government's objective of redeveloping brownfield land and disused buildings first. This also reinforces existing communities and makes best use of the existing urban and rural amenities.'

All 4 of these statements appear entirely applicable for this site and as such it is considered that the application accords with the Government's current thinking on the conversion of existing buildings where they are not already being fully utilized.

### **Conclusion:**

It is considered therefore that the proposal to convert the first floor area to residential use will be of benefit in that it will provide a new dwelling and eliminate an unused resource. Its full time occupation should also result in an improved maintenance regime. Occupation of the flat will also improve natural surveillance of Priory Road. The alterations to the roof-scape will result in a significant aesthetic improvement and will return the 'form' and massing of the building to something close to how it originally would have been. Overall it is therefore considered that the proposal to bring the building back in to use will be of benefit to the site and Priory Road generally.

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