

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



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for

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO BUILDING TO FORM RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE AND REMOVE ELEVATED LINK CORRIDOR

at

**FORMER CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU OFFICES
24 THE CRESENT
SPALDING
LINCOLNSHIRE**

for

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Director
A.J. Oglesby RIBA

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PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE

Site observation and analysis

Location

The site is located in the town centre of Spalding, Lincolnshire and is the property known as 24 The Crescent, Spalding formerly occupied by the Citizen's Advice Bureau. The area of this building extends to approximately 318m² at first floor level however the area of works is limited to just 16m². The works comprise two elements, one of which fronts the Crescent at ground floor level and the other spans Foundry Lane at first floor level. The location is identified within figure 01 below.

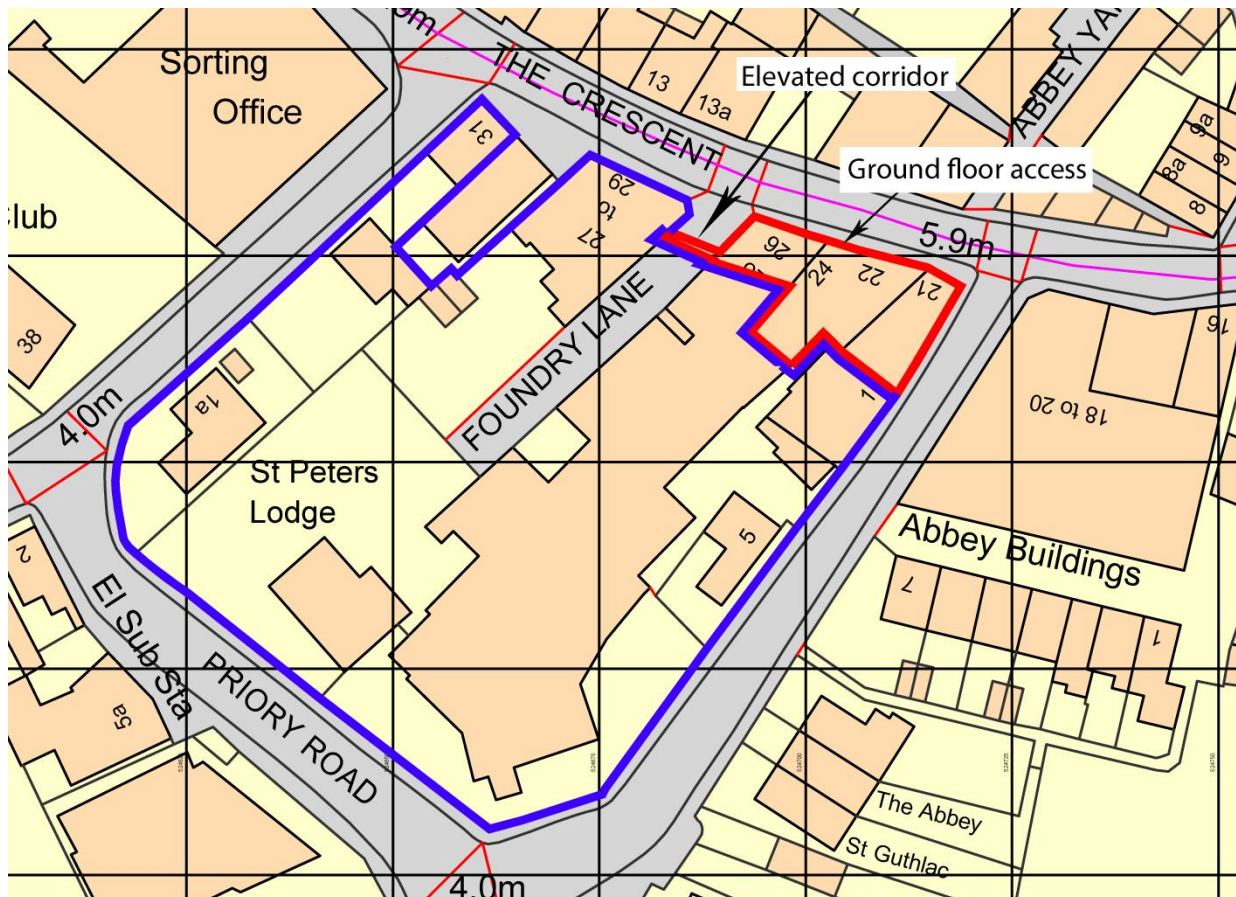


Fig. 01 – Site Location Plan

Site description

The site comprises two elements of the now redundant first floor offices formerly occupied by the CAB which are numbered 24 The Crescent and sit above those ground floor units identified as 21 to 26 The Crescent. Within this overall block there are two specific areas where works are proposed. These are limited to a ground floor shopfront and a first floor elevated link corridor. The ground floor area gives access and provides facilities for accommodation located at first floor level. It is proposed (separately) that the existing first floor offices be converted to residential accommodation under the current (temporary) planning policy allowing such conversion without planning approval. The elements are therefore as follows:

- i. The first is located on the Crescent frontage and comprises a single room with a staircase rising from ground to first floor level, in addition there is a small cupboard under the stairs. This room has a pedestrian door opening directly off the footpath.

The frontage is mainly glazed (as a shop-front) within a painted timber frame. There is a blank sign panel over the shopfront and also a blank projecting box which contains ventilation equipment. Refer to figures 02 and 03. The works however only relate to the alterations to the building exterior.

- ii. The first floor area comprises an elevated, glazed walkway that connects number 24 to 27/29 the Crescent and spans across the entrance to Foundry Lane. This was constructed relatively late in the 20th Century as a means of connecting office accommodation in the same occupation but separated by the road below. Refer to figures 04 and 05.



Fig. 02 – General view of Crescent frontage



Fig. 03 – Detailed view of Crescent elevation



Fig. 04 – General view of elevated walkway



Fig. 05 – Detailed view of elevated walkway.

Site boundaries

The overall site is defined on figure 01 above.

The works area fronting the Crescent is entirely enclosed by the surrounding building on the south, east and west sides. The north boundary is defined by the rear edge of the footpath on the south side of The Crescent.

The elevated walkway is defined at both ends by the abutting buildings.

Neighbouring Development

Outside of the site boundaries, built form in this area comprises relatively high density urban development. The majority of buildings to the immediate north and east of the site are in

retail use, at least at ground floor level. To the west there are a small number of retail units and several buildings utilized as offices. To the south and south-west of the site development rapidly changes from commercial to residential use. In general, the site sits at that point in the town where 'use' is changing from retail / commercial to residential.

Existing access arrangements

The site currently has a pedestrian access directly from the Crescent only.

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.

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 late 19th and throughout the 20th Century.

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 comprises mostly retail units at ground floor level with unoccupied offices above. 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 are proposed to the existing occupied shops at ground floor level on this site generally. The first floor offices have been unoccupied for a considerable period of time. At present therefore the upper floor area (to which the ground floor area concerned provide access) 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 Crescent 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-19th 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.

Grundy Plan of 1732

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.

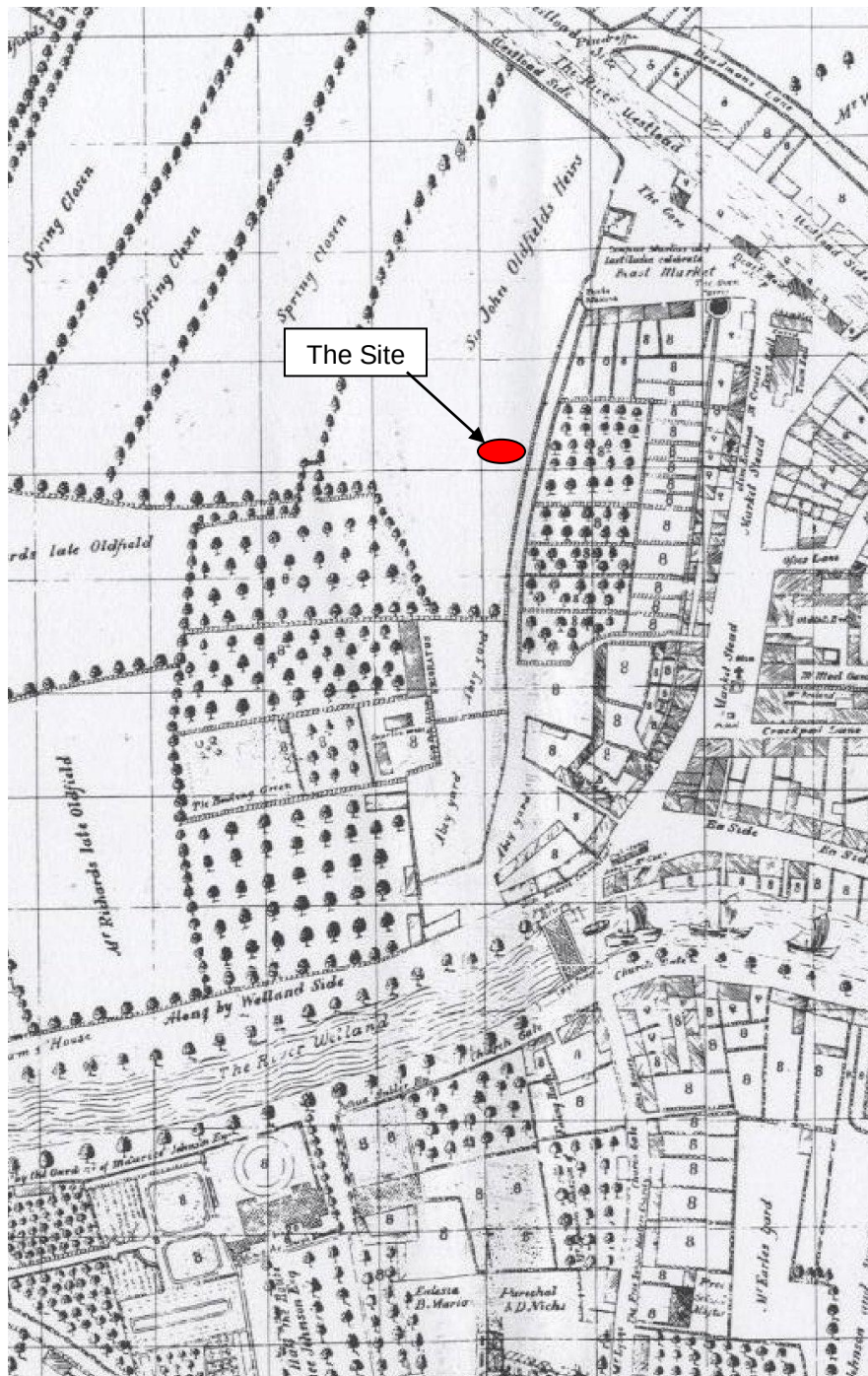
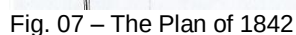


Fig. 06 – The Grundy Map of 1732

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.



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. To the south-west of the site St. Peter's Lodge stands in open grounds.



Fig. 8 – The Map of 1887

Ordnance Survey Map of 1973

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.

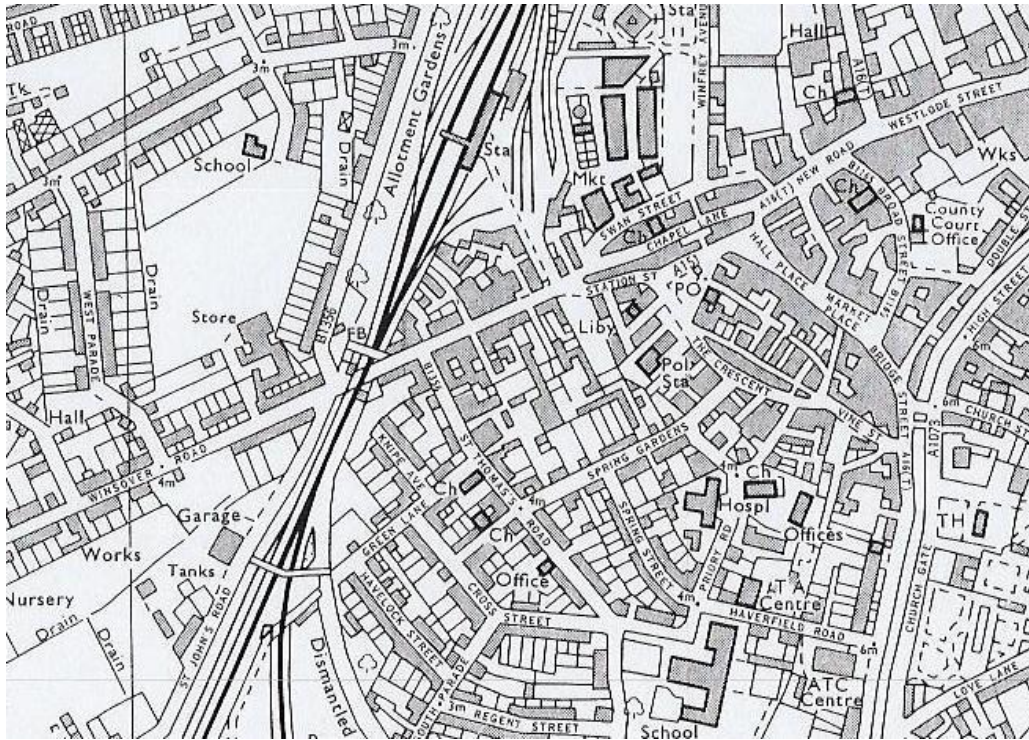


Fig. 9 – Ordnance Survey Plan of 1973

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 ground floor area which is the focus for redevelopment is of suitable size to provide the access arrangements required to serve the first floor.
2. The external appearance of the ground floor area is not considered to be of any value in terms of historic or architectural importance. External alterations to this element 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 elevated walkway is a 20th Century addition which is considered to have no architectural or historic value. Its removal would be of benefit to both buildings and also to the view in to Foundry Lane.

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 convert the disused first floor office accommodation to residential apartments. The proposed alterations to the ground floor level area will enable the conversion and will therefore be residential in nature. Whilst the site is not currently in residential use it is believed that the whole first floor will have been in residential use at some stage in the buildings history. 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.

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

The redesign of the former 'shop-front' to the Crescent attempts to provide a façade that sits comfortably within the street-scene whilst accommodating the needs of the development. Traditional materials and appearance are proposed as the site is within the town's conservation area.

The removal of the link requires the infilling of the corridor openings to the gable walls of both buildings. This will be done in materials and construction to match existing. This it is considered is the most sympathetic approach.

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.

All apartments will have stair access only. This is a restriction imposed by the fabric of the existing building.

Demolition:

The removal of the elevated link corridor is, strictly speaking, 'demolition within the conservation area' and as such this is applied for as part of this application. Whilst the demolition is not entirely necessary to facilitate the conversion of the disused offices to apartments it is nonetheless desired as its removal would be of positive benefit to Foundry Lane. The demolition will require an amount of 'making good' to first floor areas of the building where openings were made during its construction. It is therefore proposed that these be infilled using materials to match existing in all respects.

Conclusion:

It is considered therefore that the alterations here proposed are essential to allow the conversion of the first floor area. The visual impact of the alterations is relatively minimal and will not be detrimental either to this building or the built environment generally.