

Design and Access Statement

for

**Proposed refurbishment and conversion of treatment rooms
to form 4no. residential apartments together with associated
external works**

at

**27-29 The Crescent (part of Aspire Health & Beauty)
Spalding
Lincolnshire
PE11 1AF**

for

GEORGE ADAMS & SON (HOLDING) Ltd RBS

PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE



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Application Summary

- The proposal seeks Full Planning Approval for the change of use of the whole of the first and second floor treatments rooms and part ground floor of the Aspire Health & Beauty building to create 4no. residential units with associated bicycle and bin store (to the rear) at 27-29 The Crescent, Spalding. The proposal involves minor external alterations.
- The building is believed to have been a terrace of houses when first constructed in the mid to late 19th Century. The terraced units were, over time, knocked in to one and the residential use was lost to commercial occupation.
- The application site stands within the town centre, the current use of the building is a health and beauty facility (occupied by Aspire Health & Beauty) with treatment rooms on ground, first and second floor levels. The treatment rooms to the first and second floors are now used infrequently and are no longer economically viable. Consequently, use of the first and second floor areas has reached the end of its natural lifespan and an opportunity to convert to residential use has arisen. Such conversion appears particularly relevant given the recent successful conversion of the former Citizens Advice Bureau offices immediately to the east. This also provides an appropriate response to the population of the town which has increased significantly over recent years. Aspire would continue to provide their health and beauty service at ground floor level within a reduced space that better suits their revised business model.
- The proposal seeks to covert the first and second floor treatment rooms into 4 residential units with 2 access points.
- Both the first and second floor of the building are of sufficient size and scale to accommodate 4 residential flats without need for extension or dramatic intervention, the existing staircases can be utilised for access.
- The conversion to residential units will require two new window apertures to the existing elevations, one to Foundry Lane and one to the rear elevation to replicate the existing window apertures and styles.
- Overall it is considered that the building presents a good opportunity for refurbishment and conversion and the use as private dwellings will be sympathetic to the surrounding sites.
- An area for waste / recycling and bicycle storage has been indicated on the plans at the rear of the property. 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 27-29 The Crescent. The building is owned by George Adams & Sons (Holding) Ltd RBS and is currently occupied by Aspire Health & Beauty. All 3 floors are occupied by treatment rooms. The application site relates to part ground floor with an area of approximately 121m² plus 1 bay of the rear car parking area, first floor with an area of 160m² and the second floor with an area of 126m².

The location is identified within figure 01 below.

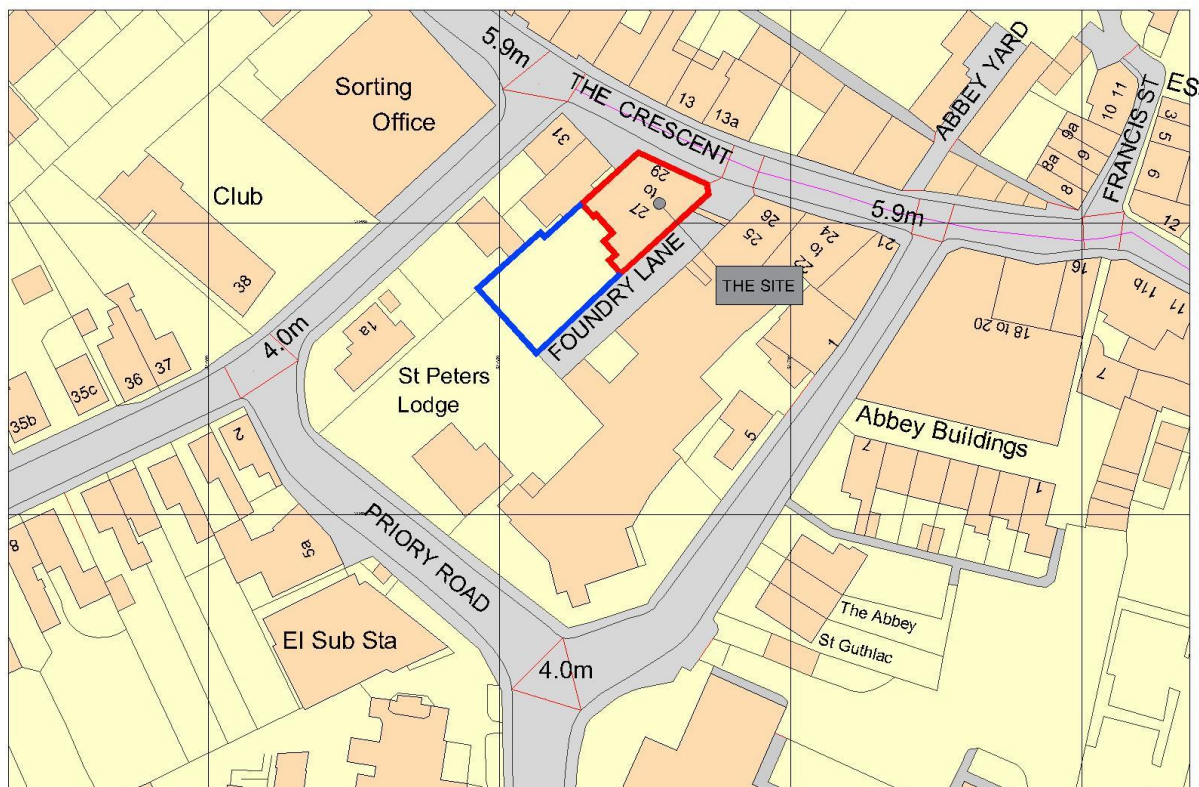


Fig. 01 – Site Location Plan

Site description

The site comprises all 3 floor levels of number 27-29 The Crescent. All 3 floors are currently used as treatment rooms by Aspire Health & Beauty. The treatment rooms to the first and second floors are however now used infrequently and are no longer economically viable. The treatment rooms to the ground floor are to remain as Aspire Health & Beauty. There is carpark area to the rear under the same owner ship, 1 bay of this will fall within the application site for the location of the proposed bicycle and bin store, the remainder falls outside of the application site.

Building Layout

- I. The site is predominantly a 3 storey corner building which largely fronts The Crescent and returns along Foundry Lane. To the rear are some, single, 2 and 3 storey projections. The single storey projection has a flat bitumen roof finish. The 2 and 3 storey projections are either pitched or mono-pitched at the boundary of 30 The Crescent.
- II. Ground floor – the existing ground floor will remain as treatment rooms and the main reception for Aspire Health & Beauty. The ground floor areas relevant to the application site are the points of access only and are confined to the existing door and glazed screen on Foundry Lane and the existing rear door (currently serving as a fire escape for the upper floors) which is accessed via the rear parking area. The ground floor areas also accommodate the stairwells to the upper floors.
- III. First floor – The first floor is accessed via two independent stair wells, one to Foundry Lane and one to the rear exit door. The stairwells are linked via a corridor which runs centrally to the building and parallel to The Crescent. Treatment rooms run either side of the central corridor. The rear projections on this floor accommodate changing rooms, wc's a sauna and a further stairwell to the second floor.
- IV. Second floor – Is largely a replica of the first floor with a central corridor linking the stairwells and treatments rooms either side.
- V. The rear store will accommodate waste bins for both Aspire and the residential units and also a bicycle rack for the residential units.

Elevations

The existing elevational treatment is predominantly facing brickwork in Flemish brick bond. With exception to the ground floor elevations The Crescent and part Foundry Lane, the windows throughout are generally timber sliding sash windows with a mixture of either brickwork soldier course heads, flat arch heads or voussior brickwork heads. The second floor windows to The Crescent elevation have a decorative timber surround to both the jambs and head in lieu of brickwork. The majority of windows to the building appear have stone or concrete cills. Although the windows are of varying styles of sash windows generally, The Crescent elevation is the only uniform elevation where the windows are consistent to each floor level. That said the map of 1887 indicates projecting bays to the Crescent frontage which have since been lost. The first floor windows notably feature concrete cills (rather than stone) and the brickwork to the reveals has been rebuilt indicating a change in opening design over the lifetime of the building.

The windows appear to be in relatively good condition although this is based on visual analysis and further inspections will be required.

The ground floor elevations to The Crescent and part Foundry Lane form the shop façade to the Aspire Health & Beauty with larger timber window, timber advertising facades and signage and tiled brickwork in between.

The main 3 storey section of the building has a hipped roof finished in slate with timber fascia directly on the facing brickwork with cast iron water goods all painted black.

The rear projections off the main building vary from the single storey flat roof with bitumen finish (which is on the ground floor and falls outside of the application site), to 2 / 3 storey pitched roofs with slate finish and on the boundary of 30 The Crescent there is a 2 storey mono-pitched roof again with a slate finish.

Rain water goods to the rear and Foundry Lane are a mixture of cast iron painted black and UPVC black.

The bicycle and bin store are proposed as timber frame with horizontal hit and miss timber cladding with a flat roof.



Fig. 02 – View from The Crescent – looking west



Fig. 03 – View from The Crescent looking down Foundry Lane



Fig. 04 – View looking down Foundry Lane – application site on right.



Fig. 05 – View from the rear.



Fig. 06 – View from The Crescent – looking east – application site on right.



Fig. 07 – View from The Crescent – looking east – application site front / right.

Site boundaries

The overall site is defined on figure 01 above.

The application site is defined by the public footpaths to The Crescent & Foundry Lane which form the South & North West elevations. The site boundary to the rear (North East elevation) is the building line. To the rear is a car parking area, 1 bay of which forms part of the application site, the remainder is under the same ownership but falls outside of the application site.

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.

Existing access arrangements

The main existing entrance is off The Crescent and this forms access to Aspire Health & Beauty and the reception area. This access is outside of the application site.

The existing access points which form part of the application site are exit points for the upper floors and are located on Foundry Lane and to the rear of the building.

The residential units will be split into two sections, unit 1 (first floor) and unit 3 (second floor) will be accessed via the existing exit door to the rear of the building as indicated on the supporting drawings. Unit 2 (first floor) and unit 4 (second floor) will be accessed via the existing glazed exit door the side elevation from Foundry Lane again as indicated on the drawings.

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 what appears to be a single building though the historic map of 1887 indicates that this was originally three separate properties in terraced format. Although it is not known whether the extant building is that which was shown on the map of 1887 it is clear that over time the use of the three plots has adapted to serve a single occupant. It is also clear that an amount of alteration and infill has occurred to the rear. This is all fairly 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 19th and throughout the 20th Centuries. By reference to the historic maps (see later in this report) it is anticipated that the original development date for the site is between 1843 and 1887 though it is not clear whether all or indeed any of the extant building is original to that date period.

Outside the building the external spaces are used to accommodate bin storage, general circulation and car parking areas (falling outside of the application site and use by the current occupier).

Context - Social

The building complex of which the proposed development areas form a part comprise of health and welfare facilities at ground floor level with under used treatment areas above. Surrounding buildings generally provide either retail or professional services at pedestrian level with offices or residential 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 in use are proposed to the existing occupancy at ground floor level on this site generally. The proposal does include for the change of use and alterations of the internal space at first and second floor level to provide a more efficient space for the proposed residential use. The first and second floor health & beauty treatment rooms have not been utilized to their full potential for a considerable period of time. At present therefore the upper floors are making little 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.

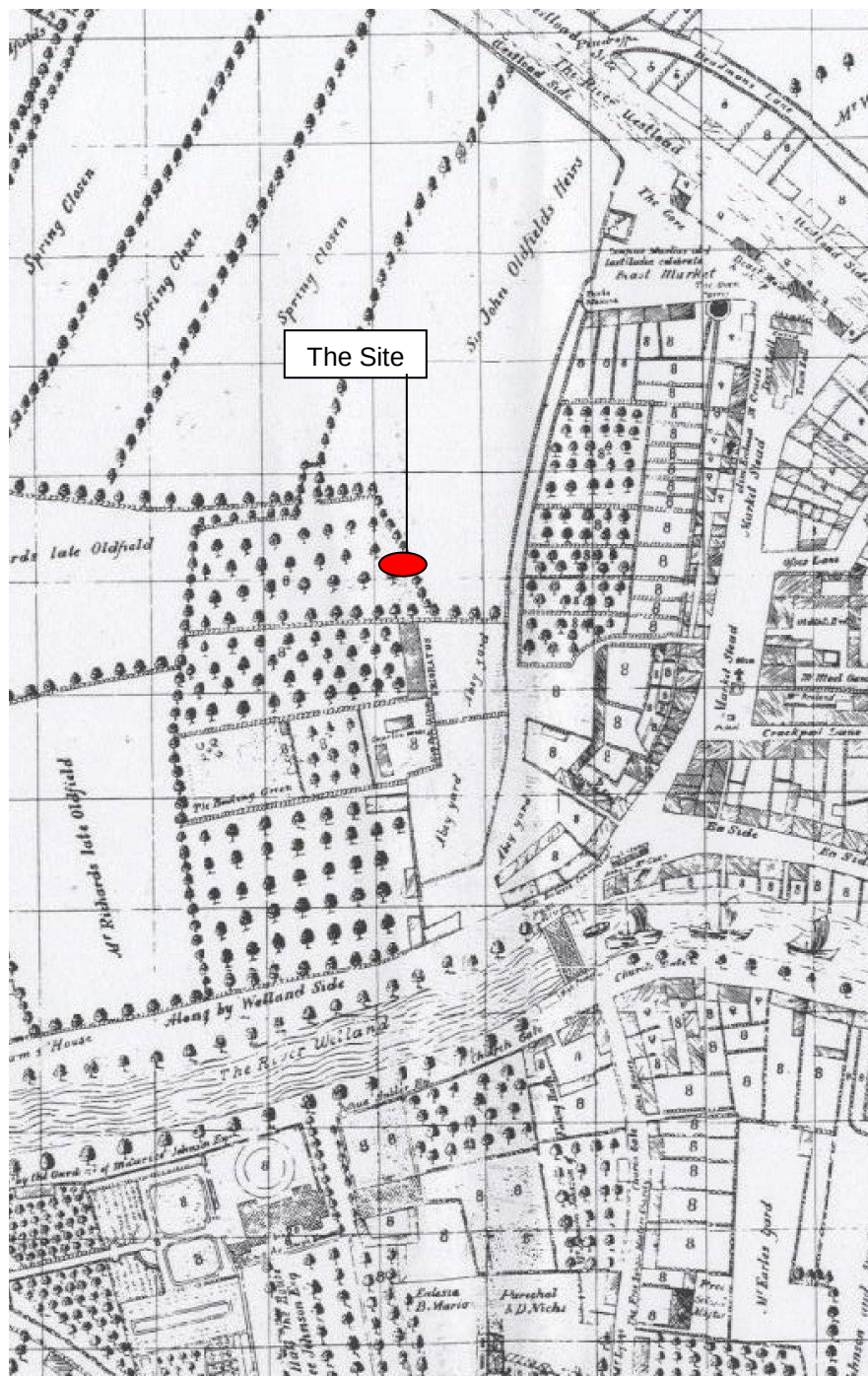


Fig. 06 – The Grundy Map of 1732

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.

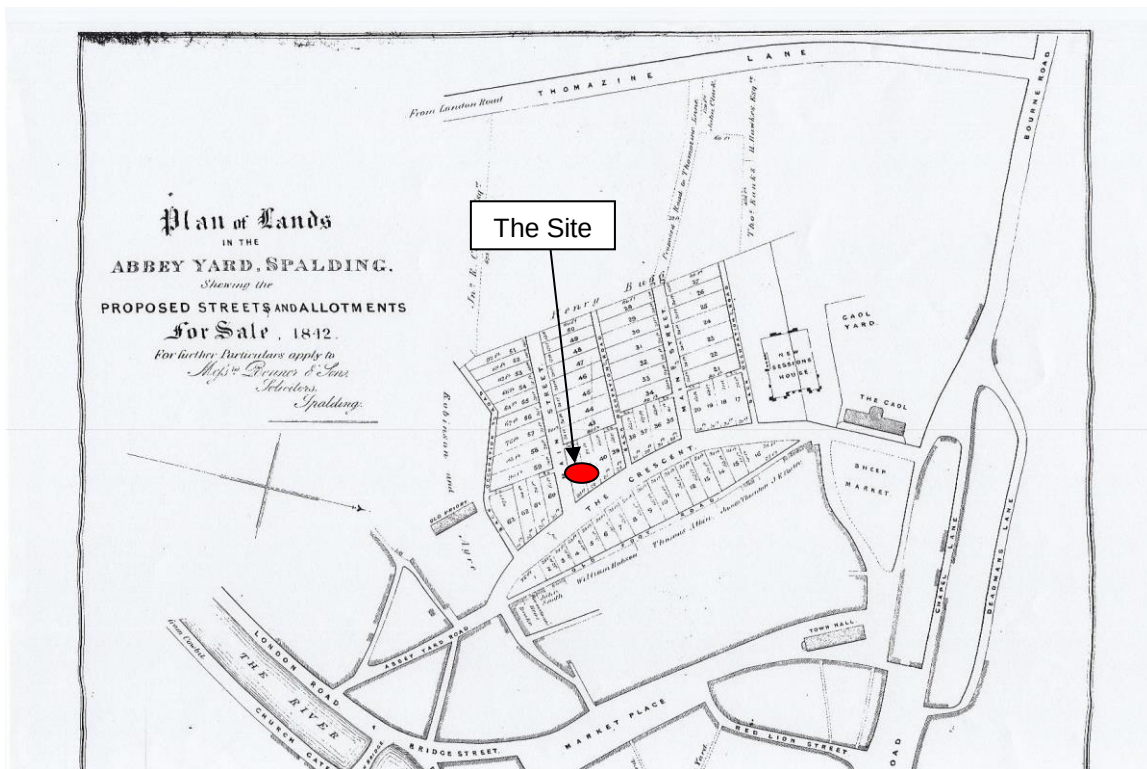


Fig. 07 – The Plan of 1842

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 and west sides (dwellings). Priors Road is clearly shown and the area where this site stands is fully developed particularly along the Crescent frontage, 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 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.

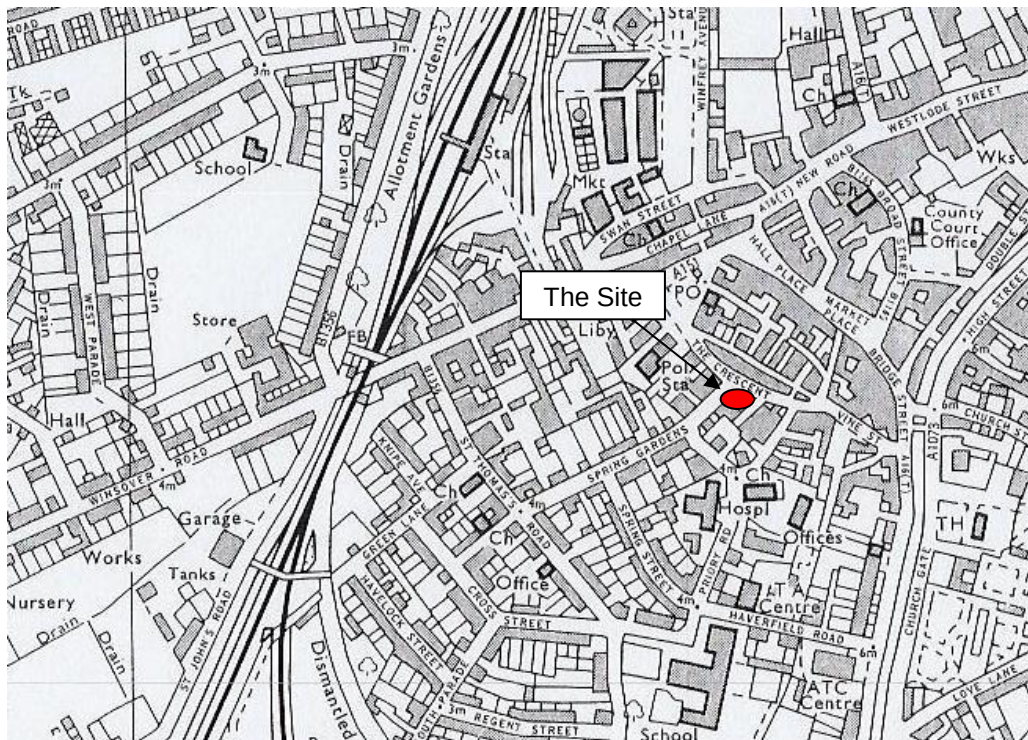


Fig. 9 – Ordnance Survey Plan of 1973

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 first and second floor treatment rooms have not been utilized to their full potential 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 upper floor of this application to residential use could have a positive impact on the area.
2. The external appearance of the building are not considered to be of any value in terms of historic or architectural importance. External alterations to these elements are minimal and would not therefore result in the loss of fabric of value and provided the design is appropriate the alterations could be of positive impact.

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 a change of use from health and beauty treatment rooms to residential apartments for the upper floors. The health and beauty use will be retained at ground floor level (with exception of the proposed points of access).

The proposed alterations to the ground floor level are minimal with little impact on the existing building facade. The proposed alterations to the upper floors will create a more efficient space to meet the needs of the proposed residential occupiers. It is believed that the building could well have originally been in residential use at upper level before its conversion to offices in the late 20th Century. Its conversion back to residential use would therefore appear 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 the former Citizens Advice Bureau of the first floor from offices to 4 residential units immediately adjacent the application site.

Amount

The proposals here relate only to the reuse of areas that already exist. The existing floor area is sufficient to accommodate 2no. residential apartments at each floor level. There is a small, single storey bicycle and bin store proposed to the rear carpark however the limited size of this still appears contextually appropriate.

Layout

The areas proposed for alteration suit the revised use well. The layout of the apartments is logical and places all living rooms on the Crescent elevation where occupants will enjoy reasonable views along the street.

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 two existing access doors (currently exit doors) with new. The windows to all elevations are to be retained and refurbished and repainted.

It is proposed to introduce two new windows to the second floor, one to Foundry Lane and one to the rear. The windows are to be timber sliding sash windows with brickwork heads and stone cills to replicate those immediately adjacent to the location in which they are to be installed.

The existing slate roof is to remain and made good where necessary. It is proposed to make good any rain water goods and repaint the existing cast iron pipework where necessary. It is

proposed to introduce new tile vents (if required) in locations as shown on the drawings to provide natural cross ventilation as the roofs will be insulated to thermally upgrade the building for residential use.

The existing ground floor shop façade is to remain as existing.

The existing single storey flat roof is to remain as existing.

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 residential units will be via a single pedestrian door on the Foundry Lane and to the rear of the building via the car parking area. This will access both the first and second floors. The residential units will have communal stairwells (existing).

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 existing treatment rooms to 4no. Residential dwelling units.

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 and second floor areas to residential use will be of benefit in that it will provide new dwelling units and eliminate an unused resource. Its full time occupation should also result in an improved maintenance regime. Occupation of the units will also improve natural surveillance of The Crescent. Overall it is therefore considered that the proposal to bring the building back in to use will be of benefit to the site and The Crescent generally.

END