SITE OBSERVATION, APPRAISAL, DESIGN, ACCESS & SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION STATEMENTS

(Including Heritage Asset Assessment under PPS5 – HE6).

For

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF RETAIL UNIT TO PROVIDE 1NO. GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT

At

ROBERT GODDARD'S SHOP
No. 1 VINE STREET
SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE11 1AN

For

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PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE

Application Summary

- This application seeks full planning approval for the alteration and conversion of an existing unused retail shop to form 1 residential apartment.

- The site is currently being redeveloped into 8 apartments as approved under application H16-0368-18. The area which is the focus of this application was to be retained as a small retail unit at ground floor level, however it has been unoccupied since the 5th October 2019 and its future as a retail unit is no longer considered viable in a post-Covid retail environment.

- The suitability of use of this site and building for residential purpose has previously been established by the granting of planning approval by SHDC within the last few years (H16-0486-11, H16-0485-11, H16-0594-13 and H16-0368-18).

Introduction

In August 2021 Oglesby & Limb Ltd were commissioned to prepare a design to convert what remained of the ground floor area of the Robert Goddard shop to a residential apartment. This design would in effect complete the conversion of the entire site from retail to residential use, the remainder of the site having already received approval for the change. This application seeks approval for 1 new unit, but the site sits within the Spalding Conservation Area and as a result it is considered that both a Design and Access Statement, and a Heritage Impact Assessment are required.

This report comprises a design and access statement and heritage impact assessment for the proposed redevelopment application for the site.

Site observation and analysis

Location

The site is located approximately 135m due south of the Market Place in Spalding town centre (fig 01). It stands immediately to the west of the junction of Vine Street and Bedford Place. The site comprises part of the ground floor of the former retail shop operated by Robert Goddard Limited. The floor area that forms this proposal is mainly within the footprint of the former shop but also occupies part of the recent extension approved under reference H16-0368-18. The proposal is for the floor area at ground floor only.

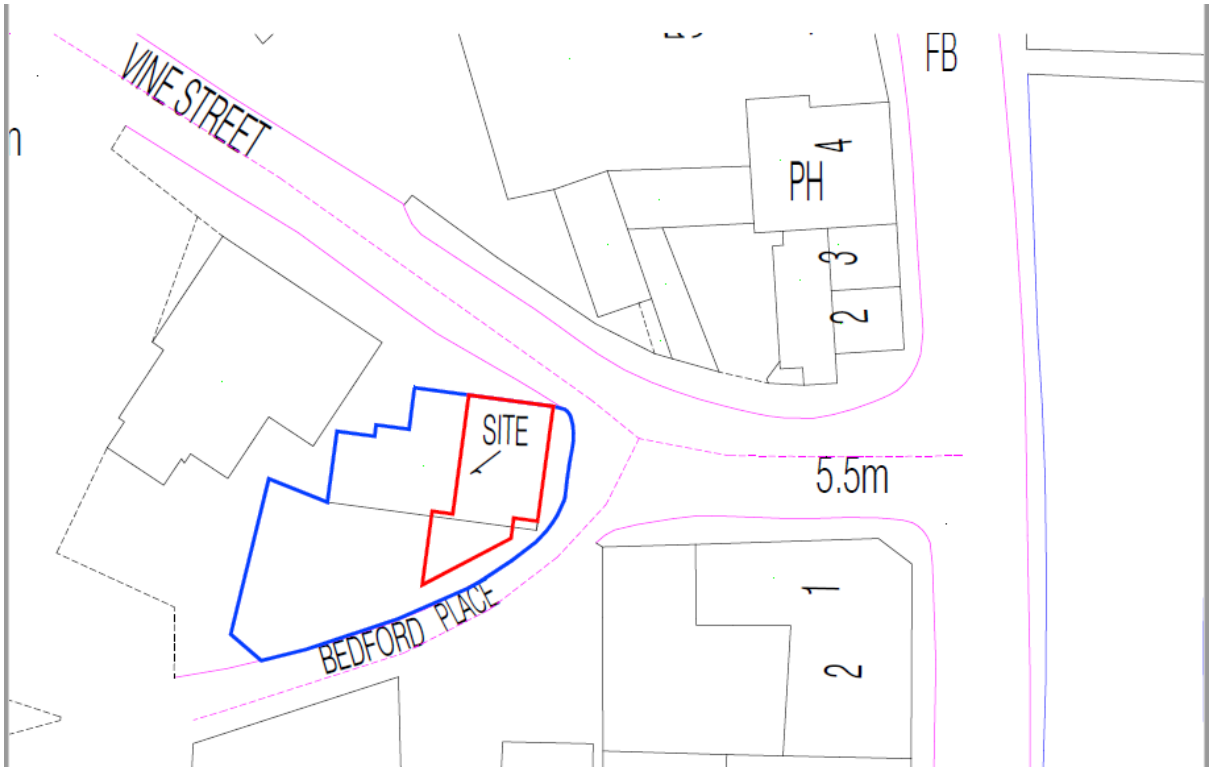


Fig. 01 – Site Location Plan

Site description

Taking the wider site of the overall building as a whole the original block occupies the east and north areas. The east block comprises a three storey, gabled block that presents it main

frontage (with eaves) to the east (fig. 02) The proposal site occupies the eastern end of the ground floor of this block. To the south of the original block stands a contemporary, 3 storey block which is currently under construction. The proposal site occupies the eastern end of this block that is currently being constructed, again at ground floor level only.



Fig. 02 – The main frontage to the east.
(proposal occupies the ground floor level only)



Fig. 03 – Two storey centre block with room in the roof.
(proposal occupies part of the ground floor level only)



Fig. 04 – East block with extension in construction (2021).

Planning History

With reference to this specific site, Full Planning Approval for the part demolition, conversion and extension of the shop to provide additional retail floor space and 5 residential units was granted under planning application reference number H16-0486-11 (H16-0485-16 for Conservation Area Consent). This was approved in September 2011.

In September 2013 planning approval was granted under reference H16-0594-13, for the change of use of part of the remaining shop space (as approved under the previous application) to create one additional residential unit.

In August 2018 planning approval was granted for part demolition, conversion and extension of shop to provide reduced retail floor space and 8 residential units (H16-0368-18). Condition Discharge applications associated with this approval were approved in 2019 and the overall approval was implemented on site.

With reference to surrounding sites the most recent application of significance in the immediate vicinity of the site was the conversion of the Granary building to residential apartments (on the opposite side of Bedford Place) approximately 14 years ago (fig. 05).



Fig. 05 – The Granary residential development.

Infrastructure and vehicle movements

Approval has already been granted and implemented for the conversion and extension of the building to create 8 apartments and issues relating to nearby parking provision were addressed in that earlier application. The same circumstances apply to this application and the applicant does not therefore consider that there are any new matters to address.

The site itself does not have private parking provision, though this is not considered essential as there is adequate public parking almost directly adjacent. Considering the future use of the site, it is located very close to the centre of the town and so there is excellent access to the town's facilities without the need to use private motor vehicles. In addition, it is a relatively short walk to the town's bus and train stations allowing easy access to places both within and outside the district.

The site is located less than 150m from the town centre and there are footpaths, generally on both sides of the road, between the two.

Streetscape / planting

Planting and tree growth to Vine Street is extremely limited. There are a few trees in the Vine Street car park but nothing of significance beyond this. In general, the street scene locally is 'urban' with the limits of the street usually being defined by the facades of the buildings. The same is true of Bedford Place. This area of the town is not however as tightly defined as the Market Place or other urban centres. Within the vicinity of the site there are numerous irregular open spaces between buildings.

Amenities

Spalding is the main 'district town' for South Holland and has a full range of amenities. A full list is not provided here, although virtually all facilities fall within 1 mile of the site and are generally accessible on foot.

Context - general development

In general the area around Vine Street and Bedford Place is developed in an urban manner. The site is not in the main 'shopping centre' roughly defined as Market Place, Hall Place, Sheep Market, New Road and Swan Street although it is within easy walking distance. Market Place is approximately 135m to the north of the site. This area of the town provides the transitional strip between the predominantly commercial and retail area to the north and west and the increasingly residential area to the south.

Architectural context

This is not considered relevant for this application since the proposals impacting upon the exterior are not of major significance and in any event follow the theme set by the previous approved application.

Materials

This area of the town has a mixed palette of building materials. Although the majority of buildings are of traditional construction there is variety in materials used. External walls can be found in facing brickwork, painted brick and both smooth and textured render. Roof finishes visible include natural slate, pantiles, concrete interlocking tiles, asbestos cement sheet and steel claddings. Windows and doors can be found in painted timber, stained timber, uPVC and painted metal.

Architectural Features

As with materials, there is some variation in architectural features. The features seen are often related to date of construction. Development to the north side of Vine Street is characterised by flat roof construction behind parapets, generally dating from the latter part of the 20th Century.

Site Appraisal

Details of the site and general context have been recorded and analysed within the site observation and analysis above. From those findings the following statements relative to the site are believed true.

1. The site is very well suited for residential development as it is in an area partly in residential use.

2. Pedestrian access to the site is adequate and there is precedent of this to other properties along Bedford Place. The site does not require parking for the reasons outlined above. The site's close proximity to the town centre is also seen as being of benefit from an environmental viewpoint as it will not be necessary to use motor vehicles to visit it.

3. Alterations to the building to allow its use for residential development would not be of significant detriment to the original building.

4. The alteration and extension of the building would ensure its long-term future and will bring life to the site 24 hours a day.

Design Statement

The following statements are given to describe the proposal and relate back the elements of the proposal to the comments made in the foregoing appraisal.

Statement 1:
It is proposed that the remaining shop at ground floor be removed and converted into one apartment.

Justification
The original intention in retaining an element of retail space at ground floor level was based upon viability at the time when the design was prepared. The applicant relocated to an existing retail unit closer to the centre of the retail core of the town. In March 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in the UK and resulted in a lock-down which started on the 23rd March 2020. Since that date the retail industry has been through phases of operation, limited operation, and lock down. The applicant considers that the retail marketplace has now changed significantly with a greater demand for on-line operation and a reduction in demand for high street presence. Consequently, the applicant does not feel that the previously retained retail unit will remain viable in this location. The applicant therefore believes that the conversion of the space to residential use presents a viable opportunity to keep the building in use and benefit from accommodation that would otherwise remain unused.

Statement 2:

It is proposed to remove the shopfronts to the north and east (front) elevations and infill with masonry finished with render to match the existing, windows will be introduced into each elevation, the entrance door will be in the newly constructed extension facing Bedford Place.

Justification:
The shopfronts are no longer required and would be a maintenance liability, the new windows in a rendered infill wall will match and align with the existing windows at upper floor levels on the east elevation.

Statement 3:
Facilities for additional cycle storage will be provided within the area allowed in the previous application.

Justification:
The site is located in the centre of the town and is therefore sustainable. It is located next to a public parking area and as such, as with the original approved and implemented scheme, it is not considered that on-site parking provision is necessary. The inclusion of storage space for bicycles is intended to encourage use of this form of transport and this will clearly have an environmental benefit. This also accords with SHDC planning policy in terms of carbon emission reductions.

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

The floor area that is the focus of this application was previously part of the shop used by Robert Goddard Limited. The location however is not advantageous for retail presence, and this resulted in this retailer relocating to the Market Place. The remainder of this site is currently in the process of being redeveloped for residential use in accordance with the approval granted by SHDC. The current application proposes that the residual retail area that has been unoccupied since before the pandemic, is redeveloped for residential use to match the remainder of the building and wider site. It is therefore considered that the proposed use is appropriate given that it is 'more of the same'.

Scale

The proposal seeks approval for the change of use of an internal space from retail to residential. The proposed apartment is of appropriate size. Externally the proposal involves the removal of shopfronts and the remodelling of fenestration. These works are of domestic scale appropriate to the original building.

Amount

The proposal seeks to reuse existing space. The design indicates that the space available is sufficient to accommodate an apartment. The floor area of the apartment will accord with the guidance set out within the DCLG publication 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards' (March 2015).

Layout

The proposals are logical and make appropriate use of the existing footprint available. The apartments are arranged such that principal rooms enjoy natural light and ventilation.

Landscaping

No changes to existing soft landscaping are proposed and as such no comment is here considered appropriate.

Access Statement:

Site Location
The site is located at the junction of Vine Street and Bedford Place, close to the centre of Spalding. There are shops and general amenities within a few hundred metres of the site. Public transport is available within the area.

Access to the site
Access to the apartment is immediately from the pavement that circumnavigates the site.

Access to the dwelling and facilities within.
The new dwelling has been designed where possible to ease use by people with some disabilities. It must be acknowledged though that the existing structure and levels impose some restrictions to access that cannot be readily overcome.

Sustainable Construction Statement:

The following design decisions have been taken with sustainable construction and environmental issues in mind. It must however be acknowledged that the existing site and structure restrict what is reasonably possible on this site.

1. The reuse of an existing building is effectively 'recycling' an underused building.
2. The provision of residential accommodation on site is considered of benefit as the residents will be in walking distance of the town's amenities.
3. Cycle storage is proposed, in an attempt to encourage use of what is a 'green' form of transport.
4. The internal room layout has been designed such that all 'principal' rooms have a view out. This will allow enjoyment of natural light and ventilation.

Further decisions will be made during the detailed design process.

Heritage Assessment

When the application for the wider redevelopment of the site was submitted in 2018 a detailed and thorough assessment was included considering historical aspects. That earlier application was approved, and the information submitted is therefore anticipated to have been satisfactory to allow the wider redevelopment proposal to be granted approval. The proposal now being considered relates only to a part of the ground floor of the existing building and a small element of the extended footprint (that was granted in the 2018 approval).

In 2018 it was established that the building interior was not of sufficient interest either architecturally or historically to impact upon development proposals. Further assessment is therefore not considered necessary here. There is however importance in considering the exterior of the existing building insofar as it is impacted upon by the proposals. The proposals relate only to the ground floor level to the north and east elevations of the original frontage block. In these locations the proposal seeks to remove existing shop fronts and windows and introduce new areas of infill walling along with new window.

Statement of Significance

East Elevation

During the design study period no photographic evidence was found for the building prior to the 1980s. Figures 06 and 08 are believed to date from the 1980s. Figures 07 and 09 were taken in 2021.

The east elevation (Figs. 06 & 07) contains the entrance door and shop front for the former Robert Goddard's men's outfitter's. The overall layout at ground floor level appears to be the same in both pictures however the shop front has visual differences indicating that the joinery has been replaced either in whole or in part. The pilasters on the 1980 photographs are wider than those extant in 2021 and cracking in the rendered wall present today would tend to confirm this. In addition, the stall riser was rendered in the 1980's image whereas it now has a brick finish. There are numerous other subtle differences which indicate that what exists in 2021 is not entirely what existed in the 1980s.



Fig. 06 – East elevation in the 1980's



Fig. 07 – East elevation in 2021.


Fig. 08 – North elevation in the 1980's.


Fig. 09 – North elevation in 2021

The north elevation (Figs. 08 & 09) show significant difference at ground floor level. On the left side of the photos it can be seen that in the 1980's there were no openings at ground floor level, whereas the 2021 photographs show a shop window. The 1980s images shows a window on the right-hand side, however that in 2021 appears to be larger. In addition, shopfront joinery has been added between the two dates where previously it did not exist.

Summary of significance of the fabric which will be impacted upon

From these images the following can be concluded:
The north elevation had a shop front at least as early as the 1980s, but it cannot be confirmed whether this was a feature significantly earlier in the life of the building. The joinery of the shopfront is not original.

The glazed window in the north gable wall has been introduced since the 1980s, as has all of the associated joinery. The window west of the gable (in the north wall) existed in the 1980s, but may have been smaller.

On the basis of the foregoing it is concluded that none of the joinery has significant architectural or historic interest. It is further concluded that the openings on the north elevation are not historic in nature or form and are therefore not of significance, though as glazed areas generally they do have a nominal contribution to the street scene.

Heritage Impact Assessment

The following passage seeks to assess the impact of the proposals upon the Heritage Asset as described above.

The proposal seeks to remove the shopfront on the east elevation, infill the opening and introduce new windows at ground floor level. Although the shopfront will be lost, there is no photographic evidence to suggest that there was a shopfront in this elevation historically. The infill panel will provide a reminder that intervention has occurred. The proposal seeks to introduce new windows in line with those at the first and second floor levels. It is therefore concluded that the proposal will not result in the loss of elements or fabric of architectural and historic significance. In addition, the introduction of the windows will assist in retaining a balanced elevation with interest at pedestrian level. On balance therefore, the proposals are considered appropriate for the east elevation.

The proposal seeks to remove the shop windows on the north elevation, and provide new windows in their place. The existing windows and openings are not original and as such the loss of these will not be of detriment to the building historically. The introduction of new windows will retain interest and punctuation of the elevation at pedestrian level. This is considered appropriate in the circumstances.

Conclusion
The foregoing report concludes that the elements of the building impacted upon do not hold significant architectural or historic value. The proposals are considered respectful of the building and the wider context. Overall, the impact of the proposals has been carefully considered and it is concluded that they are appropriate and acceptable within this context.