

## **PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

### **Proposed Change of Use:**

**Conversion of Former Offices  
At Arcadia House  
Market Street  
Barnsley  
S70 1SN**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared by Freeman Consultancy on behalf of Accessidea Ltd. This statement has been prepared to accompany and support a planning application made in respect of the change of use from commercial offices E(c) to residential units Class C3.

The statement has been written in accordance with Government Circular 01/2006 'Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System', Section 3, 'Design and Access Statements' which became mandatory on 10 August 2006 in order to ensure the creation of high-quality places that are inclusive, practical and attractive.

In this supporting statement, the planning merits associated with the proposed development project will be appraised and it will be demonstrated that there are considerable benefits for the new proposals for the site, with no impacts that would cause significant demonstrable harm to the locality. The site is assessed in terms of its individual characteristics and its relationship to the wider locality.

The application is submitted following pre-application consultations made in July 2020, and subsequent responses last dated February 2021.

The application proposes high quality conversion of the existing vacant Grade II listed premises to provide 14 No. Self Contained Flats.

The proposals are in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, do not conflict with the objectives of development plan policy (where it remains relevant) and are consistent with the direction of the Local Plan.

This enquiry relates to the above premises located within Barnsley town centre, currently unoccupied but previously used as offices by Rotherham and Barnsley MIND Organisation. The premises have been vacant for several years.

The current owners wish to apply for a change of use from E(c) offices to C3 residential dwellings in view of a lack of interest following attempts to re-let the premises and the resulting lack of demand for large town centre office accommodation following the Covid 19 pandemic. This normally considered as permitted permanent change, other than it being a Grade 2 listed building.

Being a landmark Grade II listed town centre building, formerly Barnsley British Cooperative Society and built around 1886. More recent additions are also included in the building. External modification is not considered necessary or desirable and its Victorian architectural heritage will be maintained.

Internally, the premises currently offer office accommodation over 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors, with retail at ground floor which will remain. Both first and second floors extend over an area of approximately 475sq.m each and third floor 106sq.m.

The proposal would be to convert the upper floors to provide 5No single bed flats and 2No 2 bed flats at first floor level and 4No two bed with 1No single bed flats at second floor.

The third floor will accommodate two additional two bed flat units. A total of 14No flats of good size standards will be offered.

Flats will be accessed via compliant stair and lift provisions and will satisfy necessary Building Regulation access requirements. Basic floor layout proposals are attached as supporting information.

The development is in a highly sustainable location, being close to all local amenities and public transport network. Whilst on-site parking facilities cannot be achieved we are nevertheless of the opinion that this would be both a feasible and in-demand proposition.

The proposals would fall in line with Government policy of increasing inner city housing stock and regeneration of underused areas within town centres.

Whilst we acknowledge a partial loss of employment space, the proposal will ensure sustainable use of the building and maintain its heritage as a listed structure.

This application package demonstrates that taking all relevant considerations into account, the significant benefits of the scheme mean that it should be supported and brought forward as soon as possible.

## **2. SITE CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Site Features**

The application site sits at the junction with Market Street and Wellington Street and is within the Market Area District of Barnsley Town Centre.

The client's brief is to apply for planning consent to convert the premises to provide residential flat units.

The application site has an approximate area of 0.07 Ha in total.

Access to public transport is available within close walking distance of the premises, including bus and railway stations, providing both local and national links.

All local amenities are available within walking and or cycling distance and therefore a requirement for private car facilities is not considered necessary to support this development. Nevertheless, ample parking provisions are available in public and private car parks nearby.

### **2.2 Immediate Context**

Surrounding the site are shops and offices of a mix of styles and periods.

The site is positioned in a highly sustainable location, well related to all local amenities and local and national transport links.

### **2.3 Local Area Characteristics**

It is considered that the immediate area has the following characteristics:

- High density commercial and shopping units including a number of residential conversions.
- The use of predominantly brick, metal and aluminium cladding in construction

- Town Centre
- Ring roads and distribution road networks.

### **3.0 PLANNING POLICY AND CONTEXT**

This section provides a summary of the relevant planning policy context for determining the application. The NPPF provides the over-arching guidance with the Development.

The application is appraised against Policy BTC 12 and South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide (SYRDG), Local Plan Policy GD1.

#### **3.1 Highways**

The development will not impact on the highway network due to its location and no provision of on-site parking. It will, however, contribute to Sustainable Travel (SPD)

#### **3.2 Ecology & Landscaping**

There are no impacts in this regard as a result of the proposals.

#### **3.3 Drainage & Flood Risk**

Both foul and surface water drainage will remain as existing arrangements, with no impact in terms of any additional volumes nor discharge modifications.

### **4.0 DESIGN AND OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **4.1 Listed Building**

We note and fully appreciate the significance of the Grade II listing of the building, and confirm that no external alterations are proposed. The importance of the contribution made by this building is recognized and are to be duly respected under this application. It is noted that Local Plan Policy H4 and Policy BTC 12 are applicable in respect of any proposals.

#### **4.2 Range of Units**

The range has been deliberately restricted to one and two bedroom units as it is considered that the town centre location and limitations on outside space would make the proposals unsuitable for family living, but more desirable to singles, couples and those requiring easy access to the town centre and transport links.

#### **4.3 Floor Space**

The total number of units has been drastically reduced from the initial proposals (by some 33%) in order to increase the floor space of the individual units. Many of the smaller units originally proposed have now been combined together to make larger ones.

Practically all of the units now exceed the requirements of the SYRDG.

By virtue of the constraints imposed by the existing structure, only two one bedroom units of the 14 units proposed, fall marginally short (being 95%) of the 47m<sup>2</sup> requirement.

#### **4.4 Outlook and Light Levels**

The plans have been amended to ensure that every habitable room, i.e., bedrooms and living rooms has access to a window and an outlook.

The number of units proposed has, again, been reduced to ensure that the requirements of this aspect of policy are achieved.

The existing windows are relatively tall, providing light into the depth of the rooms, however, kitchens and other rooms commonly requiring artificial lighting have generally been positioned further away from the windows.

Concerns over the level of natural light provided could be alleviated by selecting reflective surfaces and possibly tested using a light meter, if needed.

#### **4.5 Sale of Property**

Details of the previous attempts to sell the property are covered in accompanying document by SMC Brownhill Vickers.

#### **4.6 Storage Areas**

The submitted plans indicated a suitable location for Communal Storage on the ground floor.

The storage area is, to some extent, flexible in that more space could be added without significant detriment to the retained commercial spaces.

As can be seen from the revised plans there is ample scope for further storage on the upper floors by utilizing the lift. Whilst not as convenient as ground floor storage, it would be of benefit to the upper floor apartments.

#### **4.7 Amenity Space**

The fact that the building is located in the town centre inevitably means that the provision of amenity space presents something of a challenge. Having said that, there are several opportunities which present themselves and are worthy of consideration. Namely;

The town centre itself benefits from having several public open seating areas, some landscaped, where people can meet and “socialise”, as is similarly the case where people live in any town centre throughout Europe.

Churchfields Peace Gardens and Locke Park lie within walking distance of the building. It is noted that the amenity space could take the form of a balcony, which suggests a further, but more costly avenue might be explored.

There are flat roof areas on the third and fourth floors of the building.

The third floor areas could be utilized, privately, by the two apartments on that floor providing suitable access can be verified.

There exists an access staircase up to the fourth floor where, there is a plant room, and, again, an expansive flat roof area. Like many inner city areas this might be converted to an amenity space, or even a roof garden.

Clearly, either of the latter forgoing suggestions would require further in-depth structural and visual consideration.

#### **4.8 Cycle Storage**

A part of the storage area, previously identified, is to be dedicated to cycle storage; whilst racking may be needed, dependant upon numbers, there is ample scope and flexibility in meeting the any requirements.

As above there is a surfeit of potential storage areas on the upper floors accessible by lift.

#### **4.9 Bin Store**

Please see allocated space on the ground floor, and the note regarding further flexibility of available space. The type and number of bins are to be agreed.

#### **4.10 Noise Levels**

Clearly the floors and walls will need to be upgraded to meet current part F of the Building Regulations.

The majority of windows appear to be direct glazed, without opening lights.

Heavy grade glazing or secondary glazing is the well tried and accepted solution to such situations.

A centralised MHVR system of ventilation would be advisable as this would eliminate the need for opening lights to windows, involving modification, or punctuating the building fabric with ventilation terminals.

A report by Environmental Noise Solutions Ltd accompanies this application.

#### **4.11 Trigger Levels**

Whilst the policies requiring contributions are acknowledged, it should be noted that the reduction in numbers obviously affects the level of contributions needed and the trigger levels for other policies ie, Affordable Housing policy H7, Open Space and sustainable travel contributions.

#### **4.12 Broadband Details**

A technical consideration which would need to be detailed and addressed prior to commencement,

### **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The proposed development therefore has been worked up following engagement with officers of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and relevant consultees. The application proposals will deliver a high quality scheme that is a significant improvement over the current site conditions and this underused building to provide sustainable residential opportunities.

For these reasons we believe that the application should be considered for approval by the Council.

The map shows the town center of Barnsley. Key streets include West Way (A628), Albert Street, Wellington Street, New Street, and Wesley Street. Landmarks such as The Alhambra Shopping Centre, TK Maxx, and the Central Library are visible. A white arrow points to the location of the Barnsley Learning Centre on Albert Street.

7

**Appendix 2: Proposed Floor Layouts (Refer to detailed drawings)**



