

Mr James Holmes

18 Regent Street, Barnsley, S70 2HG

Variation of condition 2 of application 2021/1317 (External alterations including installation of shop fronts at ground floor on building frontage, changes to the external facing materials, new and replacement windows and new pedestrian building entrance to the upper floors) to allow change to window materials, shop front at ground floor, and retention of some existing windows

Site Description

The application relates to a 1960's, 4 storey, 'L' shaped, flat roofed office building (previously class B1, currently Class E) located to the North of Regent Street in the Courthouse Campus district of Barnsley Town Centre. Regent street consists of a mixture of offices, (predominantly solicitors), restaurants, estate agents and apartments. There is a small canopy at the front of the building over the front entrance together with a paved forecourt area. To the right of the building is an archway that leads to a private parking area to the side/rear. The building has a total of circa 25,000sq ft of internal floor space. The building is currently vacant and undergoing the renovations approved under applications 2021/1110 & 2021/1317.

The building is located within the Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area.

Site History

2021/1110 - Change of use from offices to 39 no residential apartments (Application to determine if prior approval is required) – Prior approval not required

2021/1317 - External alterations including installation of shop fronts at ground floor on building frontage, changes to the external facing materials, new and replacement windows and new pedestrian building entrance to the upper floors – approved subject to conditions

Proposed Development

This application follows on from the Prior Notification application to convert part of the ground floor and all of the upper floors into 39 apartments (Ref: 2021/1110) and the approval of the external alterations including installation of shop fronts at ground floor on building frontage, changes to the external facing materials, new and replacement windows and new pedestrian building entrance to the upper floors (Ref: 2021/1317).

Following on from those approvals the applicant now proposes some amendments to the external appearance of the building. The fenestration on each elevation has been revised but the most noticeable differences are on the front elevation which faces Regent Street.

On the ground floor, previously the commercial unit had an arched bay over the entrance and two central arched bays with a square bay either side making up the shop front. The current proposal retains a similar arched bay for the main entrance but replaces the central arched bays with square bays with advertising space above.

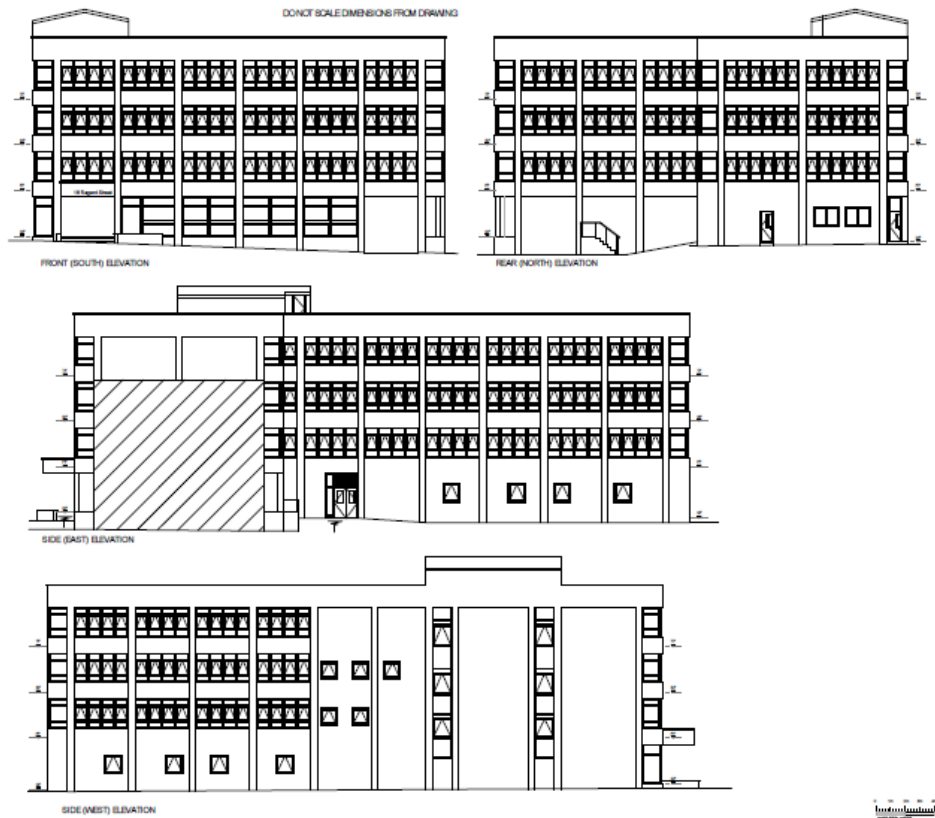
In terms of the first, second and third floors, previously there were 4no. double windows and 2no. single windows on each floor. The current proposal increases the number of openings to 2no. double windows, 6no. single windows and 2no. wrap around corner windows on each floor. The applicant states this is to allow more light into the apartments.

The window style previously approved on the front elevation was uPVC sash windows in black, the applicant now proposes uPVC sash style windows with top openers in anthracite grey (standard white uPVC was initially proposed but this was amended following objections from the Conservation Officer). The K-rend system previously approved on the front elevation remains.

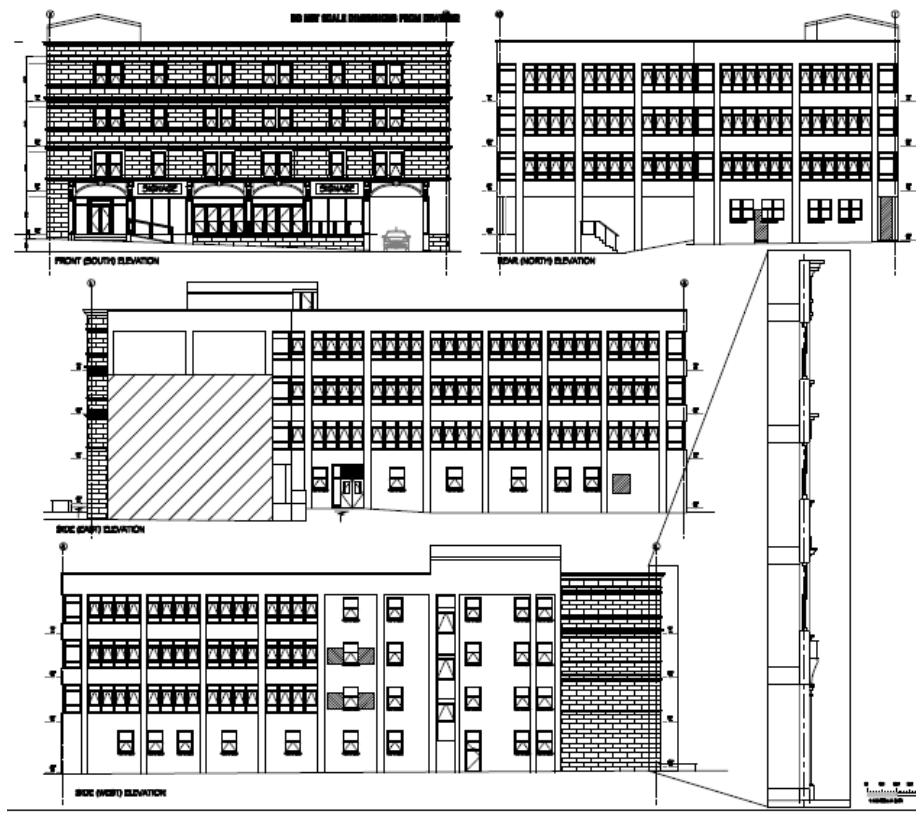
The internal arrangement as approved as part of application 2021/1110 would remain unchanged.

The original, approved and proposed elevations are outlined below for reference.

Original Elevations



Approved Elevations



The architectural drawings show the proposed building from three perspectives:

- FRONT (SOUTH) ELEVATION:** A three-story building with a brick facade. The ground floor features a central entrance with a small porch and two large display windows. The upper floors have numerous rectangular windows.
- SIDE (EAST) ELEVATION:** A side view of the building showing a mix of brick and lighter-colored sections. It features a series of windows and a small entrance on the ground floor.
- REAR (NORTH) ELEVATION:** A side view of the building showing a brick facade with a series of windows and a small entrance on the ground floor.

The site is located within the Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area and Courthouse Campus are of Barnsley Town Centre, therefore, the following policies are relevant:

Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Policy GD1 General Development

Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection

Policy HE1 The Historic Environment

Policy HE3 Development Effecting Historic Buildings

Those of relevance to this application are as follows:

- Design of Housing Development
- Parking
- Sustainable Travel

South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date,

permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraphs of particular relevance to this application include:

Para 7 - The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Para 11 – Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Para 92 - Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places

Para 111 - Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Para 126 - The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

para 194: Requires applicants to proportionately describe the heritage significance of an asset

para 195: Requires Local Planning Authorities to Identify and take into account heritage significance including the setting and the effect of a proposal

para 199: Great weight is given to an asset's conservation, irrespective of the degree of harm

para 200: Any harm to or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification

Consultations

Conservation Officer – Initially objected to the standard white uPVC windows proposed, however, the details have now been amended to uPVC sash style top opening windows in Anthracite grey.

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties, a site notice was erected on Regent Street and a press notice was placed in the Barnsley Chronicle, no comments have been received.

Assessment

Principle of development

The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

The site sits within a Conservation Area, as such, paragraph 195 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to Identify and take into account heritage significance including the setting and the effect of a proposal. Great weight is given to an asset's conservation, irrespective of the degree of harm. Any harm to or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification.

The principle of amendments to the external appearance of the building have previously been established under application 2021/1317. Given the original building is of its time and sits amongst more historic buildings, sympathetic external alterations arguably can improve the building and enhance the Conservation Area.

This application will simply assess the proposed amendments following on from the approval of application 2021/1317 under the following headings. The principle of the development will not be revisited.

Residential amenity

This application relates to the external alterations to the building only, the residential use was subject to a prior notification application. No extensions or increases in footprint are proposed, the proposals predominantly relate to the amendment of the approved shop fronts at ground floor level on the front elevation, the introduction of some additional openings, over and above those previously approved, and minor amendments to existing openings.

As with the previously approved scheme, none of the proposed amendments would have a significantly detrimental impact on the users of the neighbouring buildings within the area or would negatively impact on the future occupants of the building, in accordance with Local Plan Policy GD1.

There are some new openings proposed in the building which would serve habitable rooms; however, these generally face Regent Street or neighbouring commercial properties and their associated parking areas. Residential amenity levels created by the current scheme would not be significantly different to those previously approved. Arguably, the proposed scheme provides improved residential amenity for future residents of the development as they would benefit from more light and outlook due to the increased number of openings.

Visual Amenity/Conservation

This is a key site in the town and for Regent Street but also has the potential to influence and impact the setting of a number of listed buildings. Regent Street almost exclusively includes buildings with stone elevations. The existing 1960's building is not representative of the majority of Regent Street and is not a building that contributes positively to its setting, as such, there is scope for improvement subject to acceptable design and carefully chosen materials.

Alterations to the side and rear elevations are predominantly limited to relatively minor alterations to the fenestration of the building, including additional openings which reflect the style and size of the existing openings. Furthermore, these elevations are relatively non-prominent within the streetscene, Conservation Area and surrounding public vantage points. The proposed amendments compared to the approved scheme are not significant and would not be detrimental to visual amenity.

The main alterations proposed are reserved for the front elevation. In terms of the ground floor, it is a shame that the 2no. timber painted arched bays would be lost due to the revisions but the archway around the main entrance is retained. The proposed square bays reflect those that were previously approved at each side of the arched bays. They are simple in design and reflect a number of neighbouring shop fronts in the area, as such, they would retain the visual amenity of the Conservation Area. Areas for signage have been left above the bays but these would be subject to a separate advertisement consent application. It is important that any signage and/or shutters maintain or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

In terms of the upper floors, more openings are proposed compared to the previously approved scheme, although there are still fewer openings than the original building. Windows are also proposed on the corners of the building which previously were not there, however, the existing building has corner openings and there are a number of corner windows evident along Regent Street, including on Regent house.

The Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application and has not raised any objections to the number of openings. However, the applicant had originally proposed to replace the previously approved black uPVC sash windows with standard white uPVC units which the Conservation did object to. Although the existing building had white units they were approved prior to current policies and guidelines. There are also other white windows along Regent Street but these are generally wooden sash windows with thin frames and profiles. The initially proposed white uPVC units would have been in stark contrast to the K-render, especially given the increased amount of openings.

Following the objection to the white standard units, the applicant amended the scheme to include uPVC top opening sash style units to be more in keeping with the surrounding sash units on neighbouring buildings. It would be unreasonable to request full sash units given the windows in the

original building but the sash style is a compromise. Instead of white the applicant also amended the colour to Anthracite grey which is similar to the previously approved black units and is more subtle when viewed against the render system. Also, a number of the recent residential conversions along Regent Street have utilised dark grey frames, as such, they would sit comfortably within the area, in accordance with Local Plan Policies D1 and HE1.

As with the previous approval, it is proposed to clad the front elevation with K-rend with tooled ashlar joints in order to emulate the stone of neighbouring buildings fronting Regent Street. There are also several string courses and mouldings proposed to add interest and detailing.

As with the previous approval some questions remain over the texture and relief of the finished façade including how the dressings will appear. K-rend is available in numerous colours and finishes, furthermore, if the proposal is to include tooling marks in the render to emulate ashlar jointing examples need to be provided to ensure it is acceptable for the location.

The only practical way to address the above is for a sample panel to be created and inspected, as such, as with the previous application the Conservation Officer has agreed that generally the materials and design preserve and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings, in accordance with the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, Local Plan Policy HE1 and the NPPF, subject to condition requiring a sample panel being created for the finer details and finishes of the materials to be agreed in writing.

Highway Safety

The scheme would not alter the previously approved parking and manoeuvring areas

Summary

Taking into account the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations, it is not considered that there are any significant and demonstrable adverse impacts that would outweigh the benefits associated with the granting of planning permission for the revised scheme. The proposal therefore complies with the development plan as a whole and the advice in the NPPF.

As such the scheme is considered to accord with the policies and guidelines outlined above and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions