

5 January 2023

Design and Access Statement

Townhead, Yorkshire Street, Rochdale

1.0 Introduction

This statement sets out the design considerations for a proposal to seek planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use of the former Council offices at Townhead to form residential apartments.

The statement has been prepared to address the requirements of the The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013. It considers the proposals in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local plan policies and should not be used for any other purpose.

The design has been prepared by Storah Architecture and is described in drawings: 22-039-001, 22-039-005, 22-039-010, 22-039-011, 22-039-020, 22-039-205, 22-039-210, 22-039-211, 22-039-220 and 22-039-221.

2.0 Site Context

The site is located within the town centre of Rochdale and is accessed directly from Yorkshire Street via the existing gated entrance. The property is detached located behind a row of terrace properties bordering Yorkshire Street. The site is in a sustainable location being in close proximity to all amenities and good public transport network offered by this town centre location.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, as defined by the Environment Agency on their 'Flood Map for Planning'.

The building is listed, Grade II, within the Town Head conservation area.

3.0 Requirements of the Brief

The main driver for this development is to provide a sustainable viable use for this listed building to ensure the building can be retained and maintained for the future. The building is a former council office, which following disposal by the Council has since been left vacant both before and following sale. The building is in an accessible location to serve the local areas and having considered office use to be unviable, it is considered that residential use, for which there is a demand, offers the most sustainable long-term use for the building.

Storah Architecture Ltd
Chartered Architects : Historic Building Consultants

46 Halifax Road
Todmorden
OL14 5QG
T 01706 813214
mail@storah.com
www.storah.com

Directors:
J. David Storah Arch. Tech. Cert.
Richard A. Storah Dip. Arch. MA Cons. RIBA AABC SCA IHBC



Company Registered in
England. No: 9547619

4.0 Design

4.1 The Scale of the Development

The proposal is for the change of use from offices to 14 self contained apartments.

4.2 Layout

The existing layout of rooms lends itself to a residential conversions with only relatively minor alterations to the main fabric of the building. The layout of the proposed apartments has been designed to make full use of the existing property and windows, with minimal changes proposed to the external elevations. Internally, apartments have been designed to reflect the pattern and form of the existing rooms, with few new structural openings, though subdivision of larger rooms being inevitable to accommodate the new use.

4.3 Accessibility

The building currently has three main entrance points, one to the Board Office building on the North elevation, another to the link section on the South Elevation and a third to the East elevation, which is the main door to Town Head House. The existing entrances to the Board Office building and the link section will be retained as common entrances, with the main door to Town Head House retained for use of Flat 7.

There are no alterations proposed to the entrance points to the South and North elevations. The East entrance is a former fire exit. This is to be improved to provide an access to some of the new apartments. It is proposed to provide access steps to this entrance with a suitably large landing to the top of the flight. An access ramp is not proposed due to the steeply sloping gradient of the existing site and limit of land owned by the client. The length of ramp needed to attain a suitable gradient can not be achieved within the clients curtilage.

4.4 Crime Prevention

Existing security systems will be replaced and new upgraded systems will be installed. Locations of the proposed CCTV camera systems are indicated on the supporting drawings. Cameras will be changed to ones of similar design, coloured mid grey to reduce their visual impact.

4.5 Landscaping

The main entrance courtyard will be in stone flags. Soft landscaping is proposed to the North West boundary of the site and within the main entrance courtyard. The proposed bin store will be a brick compound with timber gates. The hard landscaping surrounding the building and to the proposed parking spaces will be in Tarmac, to match the existing hardscaping on site.

5.0 Appearance

The proposals are designed to have minimal impact on the existing appearance of the building. There are only modest alterations proposed to the exterior of the building. A later metal fire escape stair and doorway considered to have a negative impact on the appearance of the building will be removed and the opening restored to its original pattern as a window. Where windows are to be replaced they will match either the existing frames or revert to the original pattern of the sash windows. The existing plastic rainwater goods

and soil pipes are to be replaced in cast iron. The proposed bin store is in keeping with the existing building, constructed in brick with stone coping. The location of the proposed lighting are indicated on drawing 22-039-220 and are to be small pattern, black bodied LED floodlights with PIR sensors.

6.0 The Context and Impact of the Proposals

The proposed works are for the change of use from offices to 14 self contained apartments. Residential use is considered the most viable option for the building with an existing demand for housing within the Rochdale borough.

The apartments have been designed to reflect the pattern and form of the existing rooms and to make full use of the existing windows, allowing minimal changes to the elevations. The proposed works will allow the removal of the existing unsightly external fire escape.

Internally, the works will involve subdividing some of the larger rooms to accommodate the new use, provision of new structural openings and blocking up existing structural openings.

To improve the appearance of the building and it's environmental performance, the proposed works involve the replacement of existing uPVC framed windows with new double glazed timber windows. New mains services will be installed with the individual apartments being rewired and plumbed to modern and compliant standards.

The works have been designed to be sympathetic to the immediate context and existing building. There are no significant alterations to the external fabric of the building, and no major interventions are proposed internally. The impact of the proposal on the existing building is considered minimal. The replacement of windows with more sympathetic materials and removal of the existing fire escape helps enhance the buildings appearance and is more sympathetic to it's heritage.

7.0 Proposed Use

The proposal is for the change of use from offices to 14 self contained apartments. The building is in an accessible location to serve the local areas and having considered office use as not viable, it is considered that residential use, for which there is a demand, offers the most sustainable use for the building.

8.0 Access

The site is in a sustainable location in terms of its use being in close proximity to all amenities and good public transport network with this town centre location. Limited car parking provision will be made the South West side of the building and a suitable bin store area will be created to the rear of the building. Bin provision will be determined after consultation with Council Refuse Department.

9.0 Heritage Impact

Heritage impact is discussed in detail in the separate Heritage Impact Assessment.

There are no significant alterations to the external fabric of the building. The removal of the fire escape and plastic windows (which are considered to have a negative value on the

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historic context) is considered to be beneficial. This does not affect the historic significance of the building and will improve its appearance.

The internal layout of the building has been altered through sub-division of spaces and amendments to circulation, though no major interventions are proposed. The sub-division of the Board Room reflects past alterations, but has no adverse impact on the historic fabric.

10.0 Conclusion.

In conclusion, the proposed works are considered to meet the NPPF and the policies of the Local Plan.

Prepared by

Laura Aspinall
BA (Hons) Architecture, MArch

On behalf of Storah Architecture Ltd.