

CONVERSION OF VACANT DRAMA SCHOOL TO 9 RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS

Design & Access Statement
Spring Bank House,
51 New North Road,
Huddersfield,
HD1 5LZ



INTRODUCTION

Scope of Document

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Lower Edge Developments Limited who specialise in the development, ownership, management and letting of accommodation in Huddersfield.

The statement accompanies a full planning and listed building consent application for the refurbishment and conversion of a large Grade II listed Victorian building, currently a vacant drama school, into 9 apartments.

The proposal is located at Spring Bank House, 51 New North Road, Huddersfield HD1 5LZ.

Summary of Proposals

Spring Bank House is currently vacant and most recently used as a theatre school. The ground, first and second floors are at present divided into office/functional space, with the basement used for storage. The building has stood vacant for some time since the theatre school vacated and has fallen into substantial disrepair. The building is Grade II listed (list entry number 1279467).

The application proposes to create:

1no. studio apartment

5no. one-bedroom apartments

1no. two-bedroom apartment

2no. three-bedroom apartments

The apartments will be high quality, generous accommodation with a private residents' car park to the rear of the building, providing 12 off-street parking spaces.

The proposals seek to conserve and repair the exterior of the building whilst implementing a comprehensive scheme of conversion and refurbishment to the interior of the building which is presently in a very poor state of repair. The proposals aim to repurpose the currently vacant property and ensure a long term viable, sustainable future for the building whilst contributing much needed additional housing to the local market.

This statement should be read alongside the submitted drawings that detail the existing and proposed floor layouts and the proposed site plan indicating car parking, cycle storage and refuse collection arrangements.

ASSESSMENT

Location

Spring Bank House is a large semi-detached property and sits alongside similar Victorian era properties. The adjacent New North Road is one of the busiest bus routes in Huddersfield and the property is only a 5-10min walk from the main bus and train stations as well as the town centre, making the site a truly sustainable location for residential development.

Site analysis

The development site sits within the Kirklees Metropolitan Borough and is within the Greenhead Park/New North Road Conservation Area. The building is orientated predominantly north east facing, looking out over New North Road and overlooking Waverley Road to the south-east. The property sits within the north-west sector of Huddersfield, in a mixed-use area where residential properties sit alongside offices, nurseries, educational establishments, a driving test centre and health care clinics (amongst other uses). The site is bounded by Waverley Road to the south-east and New North Road/Portland Road to the north-east. The building sits in a row of similarly scaled characterful buildings, many having already been converted to multi-occupancy residential use.



Site location plan showing the detailed relationship of the site and its environs

Built form, massing, characteristics and siting

The existing building is of the Victorian period and comprises natural stone external wall finishes, pitched Westmorland slate roof and original timber sash windows, many of which are currently in poor condition. The existing premises have a large residential scale and feel and the proposals intend to return the building to its original residential use.

The building is set within its own grounds on three sides, with garden to the east and south and a substantial car park to the west.

Site history and current planning policy

The building was originally constructed in the mid-19th century as a residential dwelling, however it was converted to offices at some point in the 20th century and most recently to a drama school in 2008. The building sits within a mixed-use area with a large number of neighbouring properties having previously been converted to multi-occupancy dwellings.

It is the applicant's understanding that the council is positively encouraging more residential occupation in and around the town centre and this development seeks to contribute toward that aim.

Given the change of use proposed and the additional nine residential units to be created, the scheme will provide much needed housing and help to achieve the council's 5 year housing target.

EVALUATION

Use and amount

The permission relates to the change of use full planning and listed building consent application for the conversion of the large vacant property, currently with permission for use as a theatre school/offices to 9 residential apartments.

A summary of the existing gross internal building area is as follows (approx.):

<i>Basement</i>	<i>78sm</i>
<i>Ground Floor</i>	<i>150sm</i>
<i>First Floor</i>	<i>147sm</i>
<i>Second Floor</i>	<i>147sm</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>522sm</i>

It is considered that the proposed number and size of apartments are in keeping with the scale of the building and the nature of the surrounding area whilst making efficient use of the developable floor space available.

Car parking

As shown on the proposed site plan, there is space for 10no. fully accessible car parking spaces in the private rear car park with the option to provide a further 2-4 spaces in front of spaces 7-10 should they be required. The applicant proposes to operate a private permit system for onsite car parking, with permits being issued at the start of tenancies. The additional overflow spaces will be allocated to apartments with more than one vehicle so that any 'parking in' is done within the same household and can function effectively whilst providing valuable additional town centre space.

Given the sustainable location of the building it is likely that car ownership will be lower than average, however the onsite car parking provision should be sufficient to meet the future requirements and comply with the relevant planning guidelines.

In the unlikely event that further car parking was required, there are additional residents' permit spaces available on both Portland Street and Waverley Road. The applicant is aware of the council's policy in relation to issuing permits to buildings converted to multioccupancy use after 2011 and understands this is sensible on streets where permit parking is already oversubscribed. The applicant accepts Waverley Road may be unsuitable for on street parking given its narrow nature and the space potentially being required by other existing residential properties some way further up the street.

However, it should be noted that the permit spaces available on Portland Street can in practice only be used by residents of either this property or the adjoining property given they are directly in front of these buildings and a *significant* distance from any other residential property. The adjoining building is currently used as office space and therefore has no residents. Therefore, it is only residents of *this* building that can use the spaces. The purpose of the residents' permit zones is to prevent spaces outside primary residences being occupied by other users and allow residents to park close to their home. If the council is not willing to issue permits to residents for unused residents' permit spaces directly outside their home then there seems little point in having these spaces there at all.

It is therefore suggested that a common-sense approach be adopted to issue a small, limited number of permits to the property as has historically been the case. If the number of permits is capped to say 3, this cannot lead to an over demand and increases flexibility for the residents.

Vehicular access / egress

Existing and retained access / egress are directly from Waverley Road to the south of the property. This access has been successfully used historically over the life of the property and is to be maintained as part of the proposals.



Existing entrance to rear car park

Pedestrian and cycle link

Existing pedestrian access is gained directly via a stepped access from New North Road or from Waverley Road via the car park. The current access for cycles is from Waverley Road. Both access routes are successfully used during the current operation of the property and will be maintained as part of the proposals.

Provision for 9no. cycle spaces is to be included within a secure, lockable bicycle store, as indicated on the site plan 'SBH/SP/P'.

Servicing

Any van drop-offs are via the front entrance from New North Road or from the rear car park and will be retained, operating flexibly for the proposed development.

Refuse collection arrangements are currently from the rear car park onto Waverley Road. Following consultation with Kirklees cleansing department, 4no. 1100 litre bins will be provided on site. Three of these will be for general refuse, the fourth being a general recycling bin. It is proposed that these bins be located within a purpose-built refuse store in the rear car park, as shown on site plan 'SBH/SP/P', the location of which has been selected to provide the maximum amount of parking space whilst minimising impact upon future residents.

DESIGN COMPONENT

Visual impact and appearance

The building, built in the mid-19th century, presents its front facade to New North Road, with a secondary elevation onto Waverley Road. The new proposals will not affect this visual appearance and the applicant is keen to retain the character of the building.

The main external alteration proposed is the partial stoning up of the side door on the south-east elevation to create a new window opening in lieu. It is also proposed to include an additional 8no. skylight windows (with a further 6 existing skylights being replaced) at roof level to provide natural light to the attic apartments. These windows are common place throughout the area and it is suggested will not have any significant impact. Similarly, basement windows which are currently blocked up with concrete blocks will be reinstated to provide natural light to the lower ground floor apartments, removing insensitive modern materials and reinstating where windows would have previously been.



Blocked up basement windows, to be reinstated.

The existing timber sash windows are to be refurbished and conserved. Sympathetic secondary glazing is to be installed internally to achieve a greater level of noise and thermal insulation for future occupants and improve energy efficiency, whilst maintaining the visual amenity of the building externally.



Timber sash windows in disrepair. To be refurbished and conserved.

Landscape

Currently the front and side garden of the property is in a poor state of repair with broken paths and missing hedging plants. It is proposed that the paths be refurbished and the full hedge row be reinstated.

To the rear, the car park is to remain as currently constructed, with markings for the parking spaces to be added.

ACCESS COMPONENT

General access strategy

All access facilities into the site and existing building will be unchanged by the development and tenants will have access via the front and rear of the property.

CONCLUSION

It is suggested the proposals will have a beneficial impact upon the property and the surrounding area. The property is currently an eye sore and has been in a poor state of repair for some time. The proposals will significantly improve the visual amenity, bring a much-underused building back into use and help improve security in the area.

The proposals will also provide much needed additional new housing, encourage more residential occupation in and around the town centre and contribute toward the council achieving their 5 year new housing targets.

The applicant is experienced in the conversion and maintenance of properties of this nature and is seeking to improve Spring Bank House by sympathetically restoring and conserving the building, whilst securing its future as a heritage asset by returning it to sustainable residential use.

It is considered that the proposed number and size of apartments are in keeping with the scale of the building and the nature of the surrounding area. It should also be noted that conversion costs associated with Listed Buildings of this nature are considerably higher than comparable new build schemes and as such the viability of the scheme is dependent upon achieving approval for the scheme as laid out. Any reduction in numbers would render the scheme unviable inevitably leading to further deterioration and dereliction of the building.

In view of previous uses of the building as offices and a drama school, it is suggested there will be very little impact upon the demand for parking overall. However, the parking arrangements being put forward should be more than adequate given the high number of off street spaces available for a refurbishment scheme of this nature. This, coupled with the private permit scheme to be implemented by the applicant to maximise available space, a common-sense approach from Kirklees Parking office in relation to on street permits and the truly sustainable location of the site should more than meet any future requirements for parking.

Overall, it is considered that the scheme is both appropriate and beneficial, and the Council is therefore invited to support the application.