

G-Tuft

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Design and Access Statement

Proposed Conversion of Former Fire Station to
Home Improvement/ Factory Outlet and
Residential Units at

Former Dewsbury Fire Station, Huddersfield
Road, Dewsbury, WF13 3RN



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1. Introduction

This design and access statement accompanies a detailed planning application for the conversion of former fire station to home improvement/ factory trade outlet and residential at the Former Dewsbury Fire Station, Huddersfield Road, Dewsbury, WF13 3RN.

This design and access statement is within accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006; and Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 Article 4C.

2. Design Considerations

2.1. Physical Assessment

The property is located around $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south-west of Dewsbury Town Centre occupying an extremely prominent roadside position on Huddersfield Road (A644), one of the town's main arterial routes. The surrounding area is mixed commercial and residential.

The fire station possibly dates from the early 1960's and is typical of such a building. The property comprised a purpose built fire station providing five appliance bays, offices with ancillary accommodation, an adjacent 3-storey administration block, a training tower and separate smoke room.

The appliance bay, offices with ancillary accommodation, training tower and separate smoke room were demolished in early 2018.

The remaining 3-storey administration block is a red brick structure with white rendered banding and red cladding panels within the curtain wall glazing. The windows are white uPVC with a mixture of timber and uPVC personnel doors. The roof is a flat bitumen roof, with skylights. Rainwater goods are concealed internally.

Externally, there are hard surfaced tarmacadam yard areas providing parking and access arrangements.

The site extends to a total gross area of around 0.376 hectare (0.928 acre) and falls very gently from west to east.

2.2. Social and Economic Assessment

The client and anchor tenant will be G-tuft.

G-Tuft is based in the Thornhill Business Park. The site of this factory was made possible by the groundworks being funded by a Kirklees and EU initiative.

The company William S Graham Ltd bought a 3 acre plot and built a factory for G-tuft to convert woollen yarn into carpet. The yarn to be supplied by William S Graham's other factory 'Raven Ing Mills' close by in Ravensthorpe.

This decision was made in order to reach the carpet distributors rather than selling yarn to a declining number of carpet factories. The proximity of the Thornhill site was key to the investment as it made possible the convenient joint utilisation of operatives and technicians from the main Ravens Ing Mills site. This was around 10 years ago and the business is successful, now employing over 120 people.

Five years ago William S Graham merged with Fred Lawtons Ltd from Meltham to create 'Lawton Yarns Ltd'. Fred Lawtons moved from Meltham so that the two companies consolidated their manufacturing facilities on one site in Dewsbury. Ravens Ing Mills remains a principal supplier to G-tuft, with Lawton Yarns now employing over 300 people.

Since 2000 the company have invested over £15m in buildings and new machinery to enhance production and productivity.

For some time the company have been looking for a site convenient to G-tuft whilst having a more visible presence. It was therefore pleasing to recently acquire the old fire station site which is perfectly situated between G-tuft and Ravens Ing Mills. The purchase is with a view to selling carpet direct from a warehouse outlet.

This will take the form of a basic unit rather than a showroom as carpets do not form the most exciting of window displays. The company believe that this will be appealing to clients as they will be offered genuine high quality products direct from the warehouse, at prices which reflect this factor.

Only one unit will be used by the company the others being for allied trades, perhaps kitchen or bathroom retailers. Working units rather than 'shops'. Tenants would be carefully selected by the company to ensure that they harmonise with this principle. The company have always tried to enhance the sites that they run and would welcome any visits to G-tuft or Ravens Ing Mills if this is of interest.

The further investment by G-tuft and Lawton Yarns is important and it is hoped Kirklees Council will be able to support this application.

The proposal, for both residential dwellings and quasi-warehouse unit show a balance between the needs of G-Tuft / Lawton Yarns and the growing need for quality, accessible dwellings.

2.3. Planning Policy and Previous Planning Applications

Local policies associated with the Kirklees UDP have been considered during the development of this scheme. They include; BE1, BE2, BE18, BE20, BE22, BE23, EP6, B6, H8 and H9.

Specific policies most relevant to the proposed scheme include:

- BI-i: PROVIDING LAND TO ACCOMMODATE THE REQUIREMENTS OF EXISTING KIRKLEES BUSINESSES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW BUSINESSES

- S8A: RETAILING OF GOODS FROM MILL OR FACTORY PREMISES WILL BE PERMITTED IF:
 - a) THE GOODS SOLD ARE PRODUCED OR MANUFACTURED BY THE SELLING COMPANY AND ARE PRIMARILY PRODUCED ON THE PREMISES;
 - b) THE AREA DEVOTED TO SALES IS SMALL RELATIVE TO THE PRODUCTION OR MANUFACTURING FLOORSPACE;
 - c) THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF NEIGHBOURING TOWN OR LOCAL CENTRES WOULD NOT BE HARMED; AND
 - d) NO DETRIMENT WOULD BE CAUSED TO HIGHWAY SAFETY OR LOCAL AMENITY.

Outline Planning Permission has been secured for demolition of the existing buildings and development of an A1 retail unit dated 12th October 2015 (Application number 2015/60/92563/E).

Full Planning Permission was granted in 2002 to extend and alter the fire station to form new community rooms and garage/ parking area (Application number 2002/62/91859/E2).

Full Planning Permission was granted in 2018 to partly demolish the fire station leaving only the 3-storey administration building and converting this to 4 residential apartments and office at ground floor. The permission also covered the erection of an attached warehouse with 4no. units (Application number 2017/62/91047/E). The scheme was altered during the planning application to cater for comments made by Highways Development Management and the Coal Authority and based on evidence found during an exploratory drill was completed on site to locate the position of historical mine shafts.

This planning application is a slight amendment on the approved scheme, catering better for the needs of the applicant after consideration was given to comments made at the previous planning application stage. The administration / accommodation building now comprises only accommodation (6 flats instead of 4 flats and offices), whilst the warehouse has been separated from this building. The warehouse layout has been slightly amended and parking provision amended to cater for the new requirements of the building.

3. Design

3.1. Proposed Use

The existing 3 storey building will be converted into 6no. residential apartments (class C3 use).

The proposal for the remaining site is for a Home Improvement/Factory Trade Outlet. G-tuft will occupy the largest unit and they will have a small sales/display area supplying carpet and ancillary sundries (A1 use). The warehouse element of the unit will store the carpet rolls with a Felting Room to the rear (class B8 use).

The intention for the other units is homeware related products, i.e. ceramic tiles, hardwood flooring, kitchen/bedroom furniture, bathrooms etc, with display/ trade areas to the Huddersfield Road frontage.

3.2. Amount

The existing 3-storey administration block gross internal floor area is 798 m².

The proposed warehouse/ showroom extension has a gross internal floor area of 802 m² and upper floor showrooms 76m².

3.3. Layout

The existing buildings have been studied in detail and recorded on the 'existing plans'.

The proposed scheme has a clear separation between the residential apartments in the 3-storey building and the commercial areas of the remaining site.

As such, any noise & vibration originating from the proposed warehouse use would be of far lesser impact on residential amenity of the proposed dwellings as there is no direct route for noise or vibration to pass from one area to another, making for far more desirable living standards without detrimental impact on the operation of the warehouse.

The separation creates space around the apartment building, subsequently ensuring light is available to dwellings on all levels, including the ground floor apartments. Careful consideration has been given to the positioning, size and aspect of all windows to ensure appropriate levels of light reach the apartments whilst still remaining in keeping with the buildings appearance.

Residents to the apartments will enter through a new door accessed from the eastern elevation of the 3-storey building and have the option of walking up the existing staircase or taking the new lift, ensuring compliancy under Approved Document M of the building regulations.

All of the apartment layouts have been designed so that the habitable areas and bedrooms receive plentiful natural daylight, whilst the bathrooms on the upper floors will be mostly artificially lit. The living areas offer a large open-living space and each have sufficient storage space.

The existing staircase towards the existing main entrance will be blocked up and retained for potential future access to the upper floors should the usage of the building alter. This secures longevity for the building without substantial future alterations.

The new warehouse has been designed to be set back from the main road in order to alleviate the massing of the unit and the structures shape to the rear is dictated by the vehicle access required. Loading and personnel doors to the rear of each unit will provide sufficient access to the warehouse storage areas and the showrooms to the front will allow for customers to view the items on sale.

The land has been identified as having historic mining use. Radar surveying and a physical site investigation dig comprising a rotary borehole investigation were commissioned to locate the exact locations of the 3 mine shafts identified by the desktop historic mapping exercise. The site investigation work commenced on points based on the known desktop information, influenced by the position of the existing building. The site investigation located the position of all 3 mine shafts and provided information regarding the composition of the ground and the positioning of the shaft opening slab / capping.

This design takes into account the position of the known mine shafts and is considered to minimise the risk of the new building on the existing shafts. Works will ensure that the shafts are adequately capped for the new building design.

3.4. Scale

The proposed ridge height of the warehouse will not extend beyond the 3 storey unit, therefore the scale of buildings on site will be more in keeping with the surrounding terrace housing.

The Felting Room in the unit 1 warehouse will be a single storey section to the rear of the existing 3 storey unit with a separation space. This will allow natural light into all the apartments including the ground floor and avoid dominating the visual outlook of the residents from Broad Street.

3.5. Landscaping

There is minimal landscaping on the existing site and the proposal will retain the majority of this. The trees to the north east of the site will be removed in order to allow the construction of the external lift and parking, however, additional trees and hedges will be planted in this region to offset this removal.

3.6. Appearance

The 3 storey administration building will be retained and converted into 6no. apartments. A steel portal frame building is then proposed to be erected separately from the existing building.

This will be subdivided into 3 units. The North West and South West elevation will have a palate of patent glazing with black uPVC frames and composite cladding. The vertical cladding will be Merlin Grey colour offset with Anthracite horizontal cladding above the glazing and wrapping around the north and south west elevations. The horizontal cladding will also be broken with composite timber cladding in Teak colour. Glass canopies will overhang the entrances to each unit's display area.

The South East and North East elevation will be constructed with Microrib composite cladding panels (Merlin Grey colour) with insulated steel roller shutter doors and steel personnel doors (black colour).

The roof will be constructed with composite cladding panels with roof lights (Goosewing Grey colour) and the external wall cladding will create a parapet to conceal the shallow roof pitch.

Rainwater goods to the new warehouse will be concealed internally with the exception of external rainwater goods to the single storey warehouse element which will face the 3 storey existing building.

The existing 3 storey unit will retain its existing appearance of brickwork and white rendered banding. The existing curtain wall on the ground floor will be replaced with standard windows, with the remaining opening space blocked up with a brick to the external that matches the existing, whilst the red cladding panels within the existing and remaining curtain wall glazing will be replaced with composite timber cladding to mimic the teak cladding of the new warehouse.

All existing windows in the 3 storey unit will be treated with a light grey colour to make compatible with the new warehouse.

Replacement windows vary in size and style, with new high level bathroom windows (obscure glazing) and larger three panel windows both replacing the multiple existing single panel, tall / thin windows.

One new grey uPVC window will be installed to the North West Elevation of apartment 3 and 5 lounges to allow natural light fill the open space living. New grey uPVC windows on the ground floor to Apartments 1 and 2 where the existing wall was previously adjoined to the existing building, including high level bathroom windows and narrow windows to match the existing above on the first and second floors..

Windows to first and second floor bedrooms overlooking the unnamed road will have half of the glazing removed and replaced with timber cladding to reduce overlooking the neighbours.

All external personnel doors will be steel in black colour.

Additional roof lights will be installed to the existing 3 storey unit to serve the 2nd floor apartments. Sun tunnels will also provide additional natural light to the 1st floor apartments.

The existing boundary walls will remain, with the exception of the access gate to the south of the site being built up. A new opening will be created on Broad Street providing access to a bin store.

Existing fencing to the east of the site will be removed to allow access to the residential parking bays. Low level hoop railing will be installed to the Huddersfield Road frontage, along with a new entrance gate into the site.

Externally, there are hard surfaced tarmacadam yard areas providing parking and access arrangements.

4. Access

Martin Walsh Architectural operates with the belief that the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly and carers of young children should be considered as an integral part of the design process.

Meeting these needs provides buildings that perform better for all users.

We shall endeavour to design buildings wherever possible to be accessible to a wide range of users including people with mobility or sensory impairments.

It is our aim to design buildings for optimum ease of use by their occupants and visitors.

Martin Walsh Architectural is fully aware of the requirements under Approved Document M of the building regulations and as such, all designs shall conform to the requirements of Approved Document M, where the requirement exists.

It is in our professional opinion that the nature of the layout provides practical access to and throughout the development.

The site has an existing access and immediate frontage to Huddersfield Road (A644).

Customers will enter and exit through the north entrance from Huddersfield Road. The customers will drive into the designated 25No. parking areas and staff into the 5No. designated spaces behind the sliding gate. Delivery vehicles will also enter through the north entrance from Huddersfield Road and turn on site to the rear of the warehouse and exit via Huddersfield Road.

Access to the apartments will be via the unnamed connecting road to the east of site. Residents will have 12No. parking bays available and will enter the building via a new door into the existing 3 storey unit. A lift will serve the first and second floors to allow for easy access to the apartments.

There will also be cycle shelter provision suitable for up to 12 bicycles on site, as well as internal cycle storage for the apartments at ground floor.

5. Evaluation

MWA will be applying for Full Planning Consent to convert the existing 3 storey block to 6No. residential apartments whilst also erecting a portal frame structure which will form the quasi warehouse units alongside, but not adjoined to, the residential building.

The design of the warehouse unit utilises a sympathetic approach which harmonises with the existing street scene. Use of natural colours and timber cladding to the Huddersfield Road façade breaks up the massing of the warehouse unit and offers an attractive outlook for pavement appeal. The proposed ridge height of the warehouse will not extend beyond the 3 storey unit.

Moreover, the type of tenants this building will serve would not be appropriate in a town centre due to the bulky goods items which could not be easily purchased and collected in a heavily congested centre.

We are hopeful that through this statement, the drawings and our efforts to satisfy all the issues brought to our attention, Kirklees will recognise that both MWA and our client are conscious of developing the site in a sensitive manner.

6. Photographic Record

Note: All photographs taken prior to Fire Appliance bay and training tower demolition



Figure 1: 3-storey administration block as seen from Huddersfield Road



Figure 2: View of existing fire station as seen from Huddersfield Road



Figure 3: Offices with ancillary accommodation and training tower attached to 3-storey administration block



Figure 4: Offices with ancillary accommodation and training tower attached to 3-storey administration block as seen from corner of Broad Street and un-named connecting road



Figure 5: 3-storey administration block as viewed from un-named connecting road