

Planning Statement

Change of Use of 2 Nelson Street into 7no.
Studio Apartments



1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr Bisaggio. It is intended to assist Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) in their determination of a full planning application for the Change Of Use of number 2 Nelson Street Birstall from a Solicitors Office (A2) to 7no. 1 bedroom studio apartments.

In addition to this Statement, the planning application should be considered in recognition of the following supporting documents:

- Site Location Plan 1/1250
- Existing Plans Section Elevation - 2018-00457- P01 X
- Proposed Plans Section Elevation - 2018-00457- P02 B
- Site Plan - 2018-00457- P03A
- Heritage Statement

2.0 Site & Surroundings

Birstall is a village located in the north-western area of Kirklees. The application concerns the change of use of no. 2 Nelson Street, Birstall, WF17 9EP. The property is located central to Birstall Town Centre immediately to the east of the Nelson Street / High Street junction and on the western side of the Huddersfield Road / Leeds Road crossroads. Birstall village is located approximately 2km south of junction 27 of the M62.

The property is large semi detached building constructed from natural stone with a slate roof. The property has a traditional, yet simple appearance, windows are encased by stone head, cills and jambs and there are decorative quoins on the gables. Windows are timber framed with the majority being of a sash design.

The property occupies a slightly elevated position with access taken from steps to a central porch entrance. It is set back from the highway with a hard surface frontage which includes a number of raised flower beds.

The boundary to the highway comprises of a stone wall which tapers to ground level at a driveway entrance. To the rear of the property there is an enclosed car park which is accessed via a dropped crossing alongside no. 1 High Street.

The adjoining neighbouring property is single storey and constructed from identical materials. The property is currently vacant having previously served as a solicitors office the adjoining property is in retail use. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of retail and commercial uses commensurate to a village centre. These uses are set predominantly within traditional terraced buildings. Within the established village centre there are also examples of residential uses.

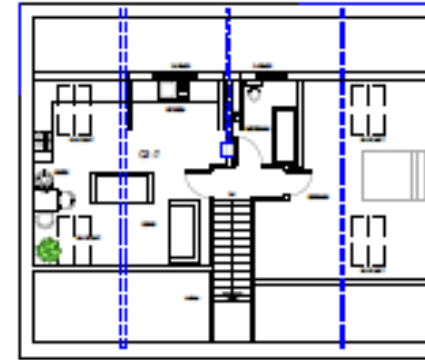
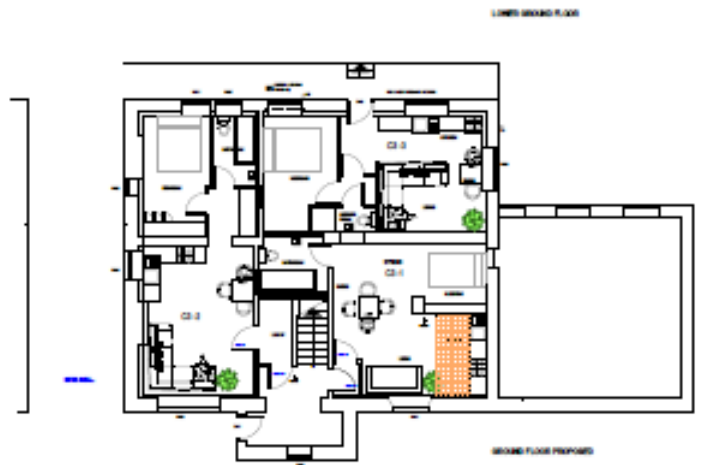
3.0 Proposal

The planning application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the premises from a Solicitors Office (A2) use to 7no. individual studio apartments.

The accommodation would work to the established floor plates of the property. The ground and first floor levels would each support 3 apartments and there would be a single larger apartment accommodated within the roofspace. The roof space apartment would require the installation of a double rear dormer in addition 4 conservation roof lights.

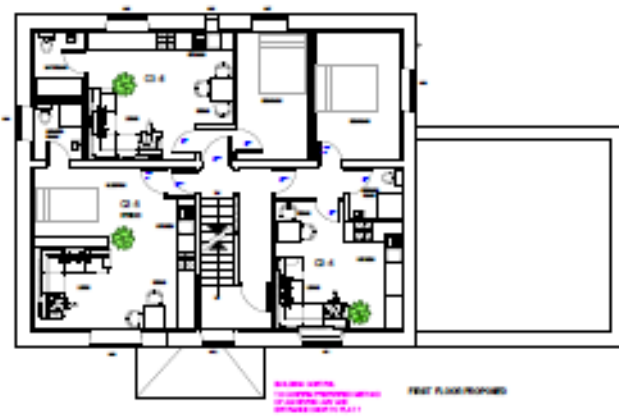
The ground and first floor flats would each be of an identical specification but the attic conversion would be larger as a result of separate rooms. Elsewhere modest alterations are required to the fenestration arrangement on the rear elevation of the building including the addition of 2 ground floor windows. The rear car park would be retained with 1 space allocated to each of the apartments.

4.0 Plans



REMOVE EXISTING STONE SLATE
 REPLACE WITH STREETSCAPE GRAPHIC
 BRANLIAN GREY SLATE

REMOVE EXISTING STONE SLATE
 REPLACE WITH STREETSCAPE GRAPHIC
 BRANLIAN GREY SLATE



5.0 Local Policy and Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan for Kirklees is the Local Plan (adopted 27th February 2019).

The site is allocated as being within the Birstall Town Centre and Conservation Area on the Local Plan maps.

Relevant policies include:

- LP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- LP2 – Place shaping
- LP8 – Safeguarding employment land and premises
- LP3 – Location of new development
- LP7 - Efficient and effective use of land and buildings
- LP11 – Housing mix and affordable housing
- LP15 - Residential Use in town centre
- LP21 – Highway safety
- LP22 – Parking Provision
- LP24 – Design
- LP35 – Historic environment
- LP53 – Unstable and contaminated land

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), came into force on 27 March 2012 and was recently revised in February 2019. It is a material consideration in planning decisions. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and the policies, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view on what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

There are three dimensions to sustainable development, which include an economic role (contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy), a social role (providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations) and an environmental role (which includes minimising waste and pollution).

Permission should therefore 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.

Relevant Chapters Include:

- Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 4 - Decision making
- Chapter 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Chapter 8 - Promoting healthy and safety communities
- Chapter 11 - Making effective use of land
- Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Chapter 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

6.0 Assessment

Change of Use Considerations:

Additional Residential Accommodation:

The proposal would see the conversion of the property into 7 independent residential studio flats. This accommodation is flexible in its availability for various types of people, it can include persons who want their own rented space but who do not want to purchase their own private property. The introduction of residential use within a central location is wholly sustainable, it maximises the use of an existing asset, is accessible and would contribute to the overall vibrancy and vitality of Birstall District centre by driving footfall and additional spend in the local economy.

Loss of Commercial Space:

The building is long-term vacancy having previously served as a solicitors office. Having been marketed for a period of over 18mths the prospects of the premises supporting an A2 use is no-longer viable, there is a realistic risk that without a positive intervention the premises could become a long term vacancy adding blight to the local area and detracting from the character of the Conservation Area. Nelson Street is not a Principal shopping street, and the premises is not subjected to any retail frontage protection.

Impact on Neighbouring Residents:

The change of use of the premises would allow for the sustainable and efficient use of the existing property without the need for significant levels of new construction. This has a positive impact on the surrounding community and neighbouring residents. The property lends itself to

conversion without the need significant alteration, the proposals would be compatible with the established mixed use environment of the locality.

Future Occupants:

The premises are located in a highly sustainable location with ready access to employment opportunities and associated services which are commensurate to the properties location within an established centre.

The site is located close to excellent public amenity provisions, including shops, leisure facilities and high quality green spaces. In addition to this there are excellent multi-modal transport links within easy reach of the site providing Borough and regional wide transport options.

Interior Design:

The accommodation will be well proportioned with bedroom and amenity spaces well over the minimum space requirements of the DCLG guidance. Internally, the property would benefit from a complete overhaul & refurbishment that would coherently bring the interior design together to create a high quality finish.

The room arrangements ensure that they would be well served with daylight and ventilation.

Energy & Sustainability:

The viable re-use of the property preserves, enhances and makes efficient use of an existing architectural asset. This represents an efficient use of a previously developed site which accords with the principles of both National and Local Planning Policy.

Refurbishing the building to allow a change of use from underutilised former office space to modern residential standards. This will require a complete overhaul of the buildings elements to improve overall energy efficiency and performance. Internal thermal insulation wall lining will upgrade wall efficiency, and new loft insulation would be provided. New heating and hot water systems will be to current energy efficiency standards.

Cycling and public transport are promoted through the development through the provision of secure bicycle storage on site. Appropriate secure refuse storage will accommodate mixed recycling bins within the curtilage of the building.

Principle of Development

The site is located within Birstall town centre and is also within the Conservation Area boundary. As acknowledged previously the site is not subject to any protections relating to retail or commercial frontage. The prevailing land use policy relevant to the consideration of the application is therefore LP15 'Residential Use in town centre' and LP7 'Efficient and effective use of land and buildings', matters relating to heritage impact are addressed separately in the applications accompanying Heritage Appraisal.

Kirklees has set an ambitious target of delivering 31,140 net new dwellings across the 2017/2031 Plan period. With the recent adoption of the Local Plan the Council can at present demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing. Notwithstanding this, windfall sites contribute to housing delivery and the proposals would make a positive contribution to housing in line with paragraph 59 of the NPPF and the thrust of local housing policies.

A fundamental objective of Kirklees overall housing strategy is to raise the resident population within its established centres (policy LP7). The Local Plan includes a framework to support residential uses within centres as part of the diversification of the centres, ensuring sufficient protection is in place to provide space for main town centre uses, providing a set of criteria to consider planning applications against (policy LP15). The proposals meet this criteria in that; the premises is not a primary or secondary frontage, the heritage features of the building would be retained, commercial use is no longer viable and an active frontage would be maintained, no immediate compatibility issues arise for residents, adequate parking and refuse storage can be accommodated to the rear of the building.

The development now proposed represents a viable opportunity to regenerate a vacant (Brownfield) property. The density which would be achieved demonstrates a highly efficient reuse of the building which is compliant with policy LP7. Its location within the Town Centre means that it is ideally served with access to employment, health services as well as transport and leisure opportunities. It should therefore be interpreted as a highly sustainable location and the principle of the residential development should not be questioned noting that the proposals are consistent with the objectives of the adopted Local Plan and overall provisions of the NPPF.

Design

LP24 'Design' (a) requires that 'Proposals should promote good design by ensuring: the form, scale, layout and details of all development respects and enhances the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape'. By the standards established by the surrounding townscape.

The property occupies an elevated position which is setback from the highway. Despite being previously in commercial (A2) use it does not

portray any distinguishing traditional features in the form of a shop frontage. The form and character of the building is simple and akin to a residential property. The proposal would therefore lend itself to conversion without resulting in a noticeable loss of heritage value/fabric to the conservation area.

The approach to the design and conversion of the property has been taken in a rational manner and follows the advice issued by the Planning Officer during pre-application discussions. Essentially the conversion requires only minimal intervention to be undertaken to the external fabric of the building. The studio apartments work to the existing floor plates via internal subdivision, whilst the roof requires remodelling this can be achieved by not raising the existing ridge line and through the addition of modest rear dormer windows. The works would therefore not have a material influence upon the appearance of the building within the street scene.

The provision of a large yard to the rear of the property allows vehicles, cycle and waste storage to be located outside of the view of public vistas which is favourable consideration to the proposals.

In addition to the proposed works required to the building the proposals represent an opportunity to secure enhancements to landscaping. This would be particularly advantageous with regard to the front garden area, the hard landscaping of which contributes neutrally to the street scene at present. Ultimately this matters can be considered by the LPA through the planning process.

In recognition of the above, it is asserted that the conversion responds positively to the context and landscape character of the local area, in terms of layout, scale and appearance. The design achieves good standards of amenity, privacy, safety/security for both future occupants and existing neighbouring properties and commercial uses alike. The

approach is considered to be inherently sustainable, and as such adheres to the provisions of Local Plan Policy LP24.

Amenity

Policy LP24 states; Proposals should promote good design by ensuring: b. they provide a high standard of amenity for future and neighbouring occupiers; including maintaining appropriate distances between buildings and the creation of development-free buffer zones between housing and employment uses incorporating means of screening where necessary;

The proposals represent a straightforward conversion of the property with only modest alterations required to the buildings roof and fenestration. It therefore cannot be demonstrated that there would be a material increase in overlooking or loss of privacy as a result of the alterations. In addition, recognising the properties position in the street there would be no negative influence associated with the proposals on the operations of nearby commercial uses.

The immediate surrounding area is commercial in character but there are also many examples of residential flats located above premises. The proposals would not be a significant departure from this character. The location of the building back from the highway is favourable in terms of separation from transport noise and associated town centre activity. It should be noted that the studio apartments would have the benefit of appropriate acoustic insulation which would mitigate the transference of any noise through the party wall.

The studios would each exceed the minimum internal spacing standards that are recommended within the national technical guidance with the accommodation to each apartment having well proportioned habitable to non-habitable areas. A good degree of natural light, ventilation and

outlook would be provided from the level of fenestration to each the rooms.

The accommodation is designed for single occupancy and not family occupancy, whilst amenity space is limited it is commensurate to that of other converted properties within the locality. The level of external amenity space would be a matter to be considered by future occupants, however, it is note that the close proximity to local parks and recreation facilities which along with local amenities immediately on hand within the Village Centre mitigate against any perceived shortcomings on amenity standards. The proposals are considered to be compliant with Local Plan policy LP24 and the provisions of NPPF paragraph 127.

Access

The site is on the edge of the town centre in a sustainable location well served by public transport. Commensurate with town centre living car ownership amongst residents is likely to be low and parking demands would be comparable to a previous commercial use accounting for staff and customer requirements. Nonetheless, the property would have dedicated off-street parking spaces for 8 vehicles.

In order to promote sustainable transport modes secure cycle parking spaces could be provided at the property for each of the studio flats. This matter could be appropriately conditioned by the LPA.

The property has an established access and there is provision within the site to allow for adequate manoeuvring arrangements to allow vehicles to egress in a forward gear. Levels of trip generation would be low and would not pose a risk to highway safety. The development would be complaint with policy LP21.

7.0 Conclusion

Paragraph 59 of the NPPF requires that as part of the objective of boosting significantly the supply of housing, this a material consideration

of great significance and weight when considering applications for new development.

The site is allocated within the Birstall village centre. Residential development would be wholly compatible with this allocation and the established mixed use character of the locality.

This statement has identified that the proposed Development would be consistent with guidance provided at a national level in the NPPF as well as local Development Plan policies in relation to land use compatibility, residential amenity and highway safety.

High quality accommodation would be delivered within a design that has been approached in a sympathetic manner that would meet recommended guidelines. The proposals clearly demonstrate that the property would successfully lend itself to conversion to 7 independent studio flats. The scale of the actual change of use would not result in a significant intensification of residential use which raise amenity concerns or prejudice surrounding operations.

The proposals would secure regenerative benefits associated with the reuse of a high profile building, this will not detract from the Birstall Village Conservation Area from which it is seen and which it contributes positively to. The proposals represent a highly sustainable re-use of a heritage asset that will in turn contribute to the vitality of the wider village centre as result to its contribution towards central living.

Therefore in accordance with the NPPF, in the absence of any adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the use it is hoped that the Local Planning authority support this application.

