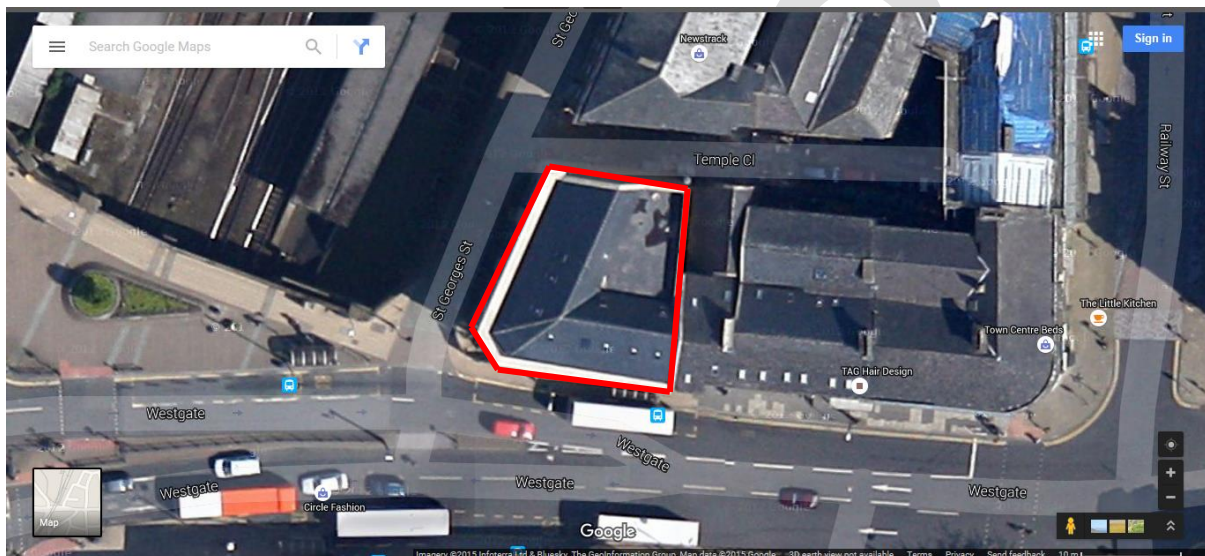


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**J**ob reference: 2023 enquiry 47  
**A**ddress: Department 44,44-48, Westgate, Huddersfield, HD1 1NX  
**D**ate: 8-6-2023  
**E**xtra notes: **Heritage statement**  
**Change of use from ground and basement retail use (Ea) to form 6no residential apartments use (C3)**



**Aerial view site plan**

## Introduction

The proposal relates to Department 44, 44-48, Westgate, Huddersfield situated on a prime corner plot bounded between Westgate, St Georges Street and Temple Close. This proposal only applies to the existing ground and basement floors only and all other floors are unaffected by this proposal. This is a heritage report to ensure that its significance have not been compromised by the proposals. This is also to be read in conjunction with the design and access statement (if needed)

The existing building was originally designed as a departmental store, approved by application reference no. 2005/62/90510 with 4 storey and a basement. Due to the dim economic challenges following the approval, the building upper floors were later converted into 11no. one bed apartments, planning reference no. 2013/62/90650/W which was approved on 28-6-2013.

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Planning application reference no 2015/62/93150/W was granted on 11-4-2016 for first and second floor surplus store plant space had been converted into studio apartments. The existing flat roof is yet to be converted into a rooftop penthouse apartment. Basically these proposals complemented the existing department 44 and its upper floor apartment and also provided additional apartments for experiencing the modern town centre living ethos.

However, following on from the past approvals, the existing large ground floor retail space seemed to be too big as a result of the continuing economic uncertainties partly due to post Brexit, Department 44 retail spaces occupied the ground floor and part basement with storage. Despite the ground floor already being part sub-let as nail saloon and hair dresser saloon previously being within and shared Department 44 access which was not an ideal scenario for retailers, it had not been successful. The nail saloon remained vacant. The hair dresser saloon was let but failed to attract customers and was struggling to survive.

Basically retailers want their own front door and hence the splitting of the ground floor into 3 smaller units. Hence the planning application reference no 2018/62/93207/W was granted on 27-2-2019. Since then only a small retail unit was formed at the end leaving the remaining space for department 44 at the front. The smaller unit at the end was then let to a baby clothing store but was later closed down. Later the unit was used to assist with providing testing of Covid 19 so that passengers are fit for travelling abroad. Since WHO has announced that the Covid 19 is no longer a threat,(although its still around) the covid testing centre had to close down and the unit have been vacant since.

The end unit struggled to be let as a result of the completed bus shelter directly outside which screen the shopfront. Now coupled with the never ending war between Russian and Ukraine and the continued high utility bills coupled with more online retailers, it seemed that many town centre retailers are struggling. As a result, our clients are unable to sustain the rents and rates payment and in order to survive, they are considering change of use of the existing ground and basement retail floors (Ea use) into 6no spacious residential duplex apartments use. Basically the change of use could have been applied under the prior notification route under the class MA but was not applicable since it is just within the fringe of the conservation area.

It will allow abit more vitality back with hustle and bustle life into the town centre. The former large shopfront glazing will provide a lot of natural daylight and views into the deep planned space. In order to make the residential apartment spaces work, studio duplex apartments have been created. These studio apartments are spacious and the duplex design allows to maximise the basement spaces as well. The part

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ground floor have been removed to create a double height void so that it will bring more natural daylight into the basement floor. The accommodation have been arranged so that the ground floor has a snug and bed space with bathroom. The basement space will have the bathroom and kitchen at the rear with the lounge space forward.

**With regard to heritage assets the NPPF states:-**

*“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”*

Based on the assessment contained in this heritage document and within the separate Design and Access Statement, the need for the change of use from retail to form residential apartments is inevitable and is essential for the survival of our clients business. The proposal complement the upper floors residential apartments use and provides an active streetscene rather than allowing spaces to become vacant and later turning into disrepair. This modern building does not have and interesting or ornate features internally that can be harmed. Therefore the change of use conversions will lead to less than substantial harm to the existing host building and its surroundings where there is significant benefit in maintaining its presence.

### HERITAGE IMPACT

The value of a heritage asset is a matter of judgement against the following

- **architectural quality,**
- **social context,**
- **economic context,**
- **setting,**
- **age and**
- **physical state**

that all are to be taken into account. The heritage impact of any development on a heritage asset is a result of the judged value of the heritage asset and any features of significance when weighed against the proposed change of use from ground and basement floor spaces to form 6no residential apartments use.

### JUSTIFICATION

As you are aware, due to the continued dim and challenging economic climate the town centre office and retail spaces remain challenging to let. As a result, of the

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large ground floor retail space and unused basement retail associated storage space, it is inevitable to form 6no spacious duplex residential apartments which is considered to breathe a fresh use class into the building and create active streetscene but does not harm the conservation area.

Our clients know that it is no longer financially viable to leave the spaces vacant and requires some revenue for maintenance of the building. As such a fresh hope is required to revitalise the prominent corner site and assist to preserve the heritage. Doing nothing may jeopardise the potential of further dilapidation. To avoid the potential of falling into disrepair, our clients are providing a bold step forward through further reinvestment and making a positive contribution back to the locality and complement the council's Blueprint ethos.

Generally the best way of securing the upkeep of any buildings and its surrounding businesses or buildings that are within or outside of a conservation area are to keep them in continuous active use. For the great majority, this must mean economically viable uses are introduced on the building to breathe a new lease of life back into the local area if the immediate businesses and itself are to survive. Retailers want their own front door access but due to recent built of the bus shelter have block visual presence to their unit. This is also coupled with a lot of online retailers that can be more competitive than any high street stores that causes their downfall.

Due to the nationally recognised economic decline, indeed it's been very challenging for most small businesses in the local area and nationally to survive. However, with the change of use from retail units to form residential apartments will assist to bring some economical growth and vitality back to this end of the town centre. As a result, the **proposals** will certainly assist not just to enhance the immediate local economy but most importantly the design also respects the heritage setting and character of the host building and its surrounding.

## Summary

Our client's proposal would provide the following

- Regeneration of the existing part vacant large Ea retail space to form 6no residential apartments use (C3)
- Continue to look after and maintain the building when in occupation
- Short term employment to seek builders to convert the retail units into residential apartments
- Contribute to the local suppliers for building materials during the build period

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- Enhance the area visually and become more attractive and also create vitality and improve the night life within the town centre

The change of use does not caused any issue on significance or any harm to the building or the conservation area. Therefore our client, seek Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council planning officers' support in determining a positive decision for the change of use of ground and basement floors retail space into 6no residential apartments use. Our clients are keen to bring this into reality as soon as possible and seek your support.

Yours faithfully

Redacted

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for and on behalf of Jade3 Architecture Limited