



Sequential Test (2023)

**Oakley House, 1, Hungerford Road, Edgerton,
Huddersfield**

Erection of Coach House

Introduction

This sequential test has been prepared by **AKPlanning** in support of a planning application for the erection of a coach house adjacent to Oakley House, 1 Hungerford Road, Edgerton. The application has been submitted by Ramsdens Solicitors who currently occupy Oakley House, using it as offices.

Planning History

2017/90803 – Erection of detached office building. Approved, not implemented. Expired 02-Aug-2020.

2020/91255 – Certificate of lawfulness for erection of extension and formation of parking spaces within curtilage of Oakley House. Granted

2020/91254 – Listed Building Consent for erection of detached office building. Granted

2020/91253 - Erection of detached office building with rooms in roof space and reformation of car parking (within a Conservation Area) (Listed Building within a Conservation Area) Granted

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal in 2020, this application is a repeat of this approval as it will expire in September 2023.

The Proposal

It is proposed erect a coach house as shown on the layout plan below.



Oakley House is a Grade II Listed Building and is sited in Edgerton Conservation Area.

Policy Requirements

Policy on sequential testing is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF). It states the following: -

87. Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.

88. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.

It is important in this case to note that there is scope for flexibility by the LPA in defining the terms of the sequential test.

The NPPF goes on to state: -

90. When assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500m² of gross floorspace). This should include assessment of:

(a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and

(b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

91. Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in paragraph 90, it should be refused.

Further advice is provided in the NPPF about Listed Buildings: -

208. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Paragraph 208 enables a LPA to approve an application on a heritage asset even if it fails the sequential test. This is not the case here, but it is important to note that policy does allow this one exception to paragraph 87.

The Sequential Test

In any sequential test it is necessary to decide the correct parameters before beginning. In previous correspondence the LPA have, very helpfully, indicated the required search area. They have stated that the test should be Huddersfield town centre, we have also repeated the search in other local centres as below: -

The area of search should cover at least the local centres of Lindley, Marsh, Trinity Street and the western edge of Huddersfield Town Centre.

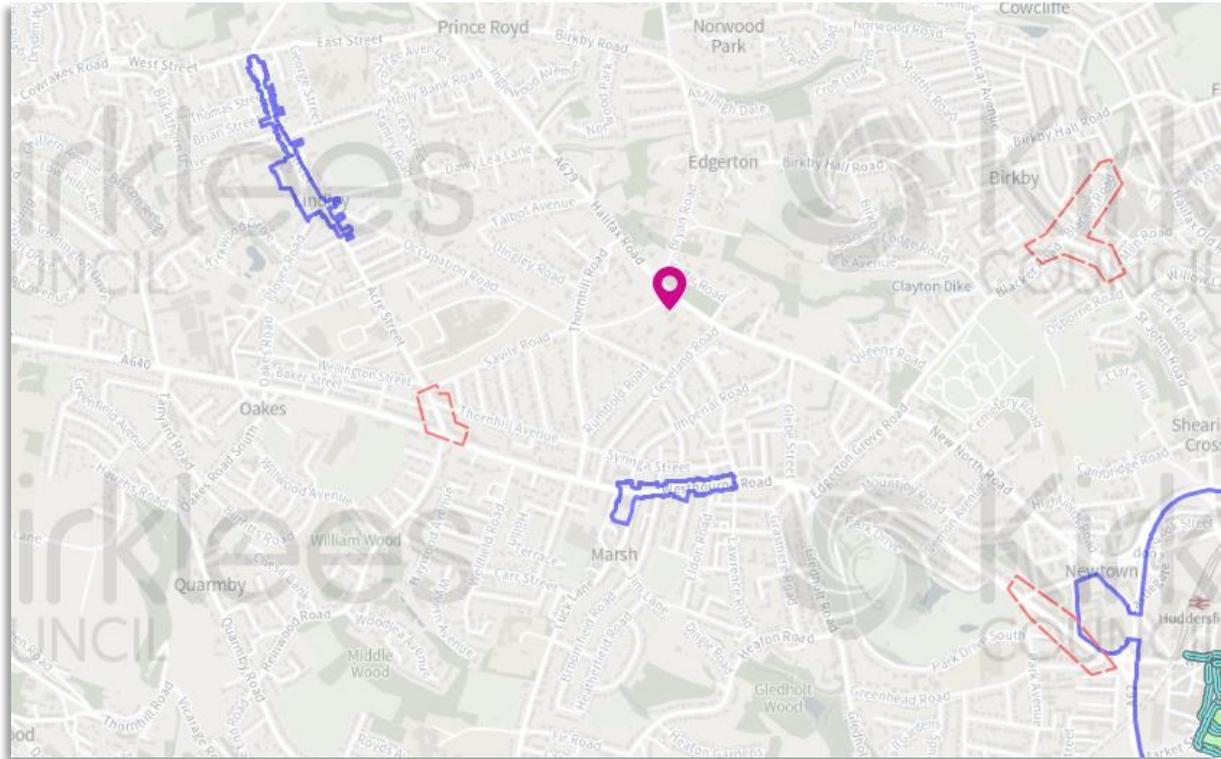
The Local centres were previously shown on the old Local plan (below).



The Local centres of Marsh, Lindley and Birkby are shown as blue diamonds.

Other smaller centres are shown as blue dots.

The new Local Plan was adopted in February 2019 and supersedes the above map. We have kept the old map in this report to show that there has been consistency in the search areas and no new centres have been allocated.



This map is taken from the new Local Plan and shows town centre boundaries in blue. Local centres are shown in red dotted lines.

In deciding on what type of property to search it is important to take into account the needs of the applicant. In this case these are complicated because the proposal is for an extension to an existing business, it is not for a standalone single business or indeed for a new branch of the business. The extension is required to house administrative staff that are currently located in a separate industrial area.

The applicant has professional offices in Huddersfield town centre as well as at Oakley House and they have stated the following: -

Ramsden Street (Huddersfield town centre) is full, and it is impractical to have legal staff in any more central Huddersfield locations for both operational and cost reasons.

We have already done as much as we can to delay the extension by relocating back office and all administrative functions to an industrial estate at considerable cost when we would have preferred it to remain on site at Oakley House and even that is now full.

We have kept to the new build to the minimum size that we think we will need.

The purpose of the coach house is to bring the back office and administrative functions into one of the existing offices. This will allow for the obvious benefits that proximity will bring with contact between the administrative and professional functions being far easier to manage. There will be considerable savings with regards to renting facilities which will allow for further investment into expanding the business.

Size is an important factor as the building needs to allow for all current staff. The proposal is of a sufficient, but minimum size, to serve the required number of staff.

Given the operational requirements and benefits of bringing staff together in one location there are only three options available to Ramsdens: -

1. Expand Ramsden Street
2. Extend Oakley House
3. Close Oakley House and find all new premises big enough to fit all staff; but this would have to be outside Huddersfield centre and near to Oakley House.

Ramsden Street is full and incapable of further physical expansion. The closing of Oakley House would involve considerable cost and upheaval to the business which is neither cost-effective nor practical.

Option 2 is therefore the only practicable solution.

It is our conclusion that the requirements of the business should be given paramount consideration by the LPA. It is our opinion that it will be impossible to find any property within the search area and in a local centre that will fit the needs of the business and as such a sequential test is passed at this point.

Notwithstanding this conclusion we have researched the available property within the suggested search area.

Birkby Local Centre

Birkby is a relatively small local shopping area centre around the crossroads of St Johns Road/Blacker Road and Wheathouse Road. It contains small shops and local facilities. The only office space available is above the shops and these units are not big enough to accommodate the needs of the applicant.

A site visit was made on the 13th June 2017 and 29th August 2020, no premises were noted as available. A further site visit was made on the 26th June 2023, no suitable premises were seen as available.

A search online revealed two hot food take away properties for sale.




1/8

£34,950

Hot Food Take Away, West Yorkshire

Restaurant for sale

HOT FOOD TAKEAWAY Prime position in this densely populated area Massive potential to open later on an evening Scope for first

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by Ernest Wilson & Co Limited, EW Leeds

0113 519 5901
Local call rate

Contact Save




1/7

£29,950

Hot Food Take Away, West Yorkshire

Cafe for sale

CAFE / DINER WITH SMALL EAT IN AREA Busy Main Road Position No Late Evenings Very Well Fitted and Equipped

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by Ernest Wilson & Co Limited, EW Leeds

0113 519 5901
Local call rate

Contact Save

Additional commercial listings:

New Hey Road/Acre Street Local Centre.

This is a very small local centre, a site visit on 2th June 2023 revealed no suitable properties for sale. An online search reached the same conclusion.

Marsh Town Centre

Marsh is a larger and more diversified local centre than Birkby. It provides for more than shopping needs with other services such as dentistry, physiotherapy etc being available. It is linear in its development stretching along New Hey Road.

Visits to the location on the 13th June 2017 and 29th August 2020 indicated that no office premises were available on the main road. This was later confirmed internet searches. A further visit on the 26th June 2023 revealed no suitable premises available.

Slightly out of the main centre there is serviced space available within Marsh Mills on Luck Lane. These are not suitable for use by the applicant as they are shared and within a converted mill. The applicant's business is within the legal profession where image is important, and these offices are not of themselves of sufficient quality nor is their setting.

An online search revealed the following properties.



Marsh Conservative Club, Abb Street, Marsh, Huddersfield X
Commercial property for sale

The property comprises a predominantly two storey stone built property constructed under a pitched and hipped slate covered

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by **BRAMLEYS LLP, Huddersfield**

£285,000 Offers in Region of
4,177 sq. ft.

bramleys 01484 627323 Local call rate [Contact](#) [Save](#)



Furnishing & Int Design, West Yorkshire X
Commercial property for sale

CURTAINS AND BLINDS BUSINESS Busy main road position with lay-by parking to the front Manufacturing and fitting side

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by **Ernest Wilson & Co Limited, EW Leeds**

£105,000

Ernest Wilson & Co 0113 519 5901 Local call rate [Contact](#) [Save](#)

Additional commercial listings



Carr Street, Huddersfield X
Shop for sale

SITTING PROUDLY ON THE CORNER OF CARR STREET AND SMITHS AVENUE WITHIN THE BUSTLING AREA OF MARSH

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by **Boultons, Huddersfield**

£199,995 Offers in Region of

01484 627605 Local call rate [Contact](#) [Save](#)

Only one would be of interest (the Conservative club) but it is too big (X4) and is outside the Town Centre.

Lindley Local Centre

Lindley centre is linear in nature along Lidget Street. The nature of the centre is small local shops with no office space on the ground floor. Site visits on the 13th June and 29th August 2020 indicated that no offices are available. A further site visit was undertaken on the 26th June 2023 and this revealed no suitable building for sale.

An online search revealed no suitable premises.

☰ Prioritise properties with... + Add keyword



17

£225,000 Offers in Region of



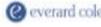
Highgate 264 New Hey Road, Huddersfield, HD3 4BU ✕

Pub for sale

Community Pub in Densely Populated Residential Area Close to Huddersfield Town Centre

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by Everard Cole Ltd, Leeds

 0113 519 7012
Local call rate

 Contact  Save



17

£54,950



Fish & Chips, Lindley, West Yorkshire ✕

Restaurant for sale

FISH AND CHIPS / HOT FOOD TAKEAWAY Fantastic trading position in this affluent village Trades in very limited hours with no

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by Ernest Wilson & Co Limited, EW Leeds

 0113 519 5901
Local call rate

 Contact  Save



1/12

£49,500 Leasehold



Cellar Door, Lidget Street, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire,... ✕

Restaurant for sale

BUSINESS FOR SALE! Well-known and extremely popular innovative bar and eatery business £49,500 + SAV! Premises

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by Alan J Picken, Ilkley

 01943 661793
Local call rate

 Contact  Save

Huddersfield Centre

The HD1 project at the railway station is within the search area and the first office premises are available to let however it is some 3000 sq ft and too large for our purposes. Other premises here may be available soon in HD1, however the minimum size available is 2000 sq ft and we do not know when this will be available.

Within St Georges Square several offices are available to let (none for sale). Letting an office is not the preferred option and the offices available in St Georges Square are of various sizes which if added together could accommodate the business in different buildings or on different floors. This is not an option that allows for the efficient running of the whole business. The purpose of the proposed extension is to bring elements of the business together, moving them to several locations close to each other doesn't allow for improved efficiency and would be pointless.

It should also be added that previous visits by the writer to several of the offices in St Georges Square revealed that many needed up-dating, and most were not accessible.

There are no other offices advertised online or on site within the search area.

Other Considerations

Edgerton Road and Hungerford Road are in fact a mixed-use area. Many of the large detached buildings have been converted from single dwellings to offices for large businesses. There are dental practices, nurseries and offices in close proximity to the application site. The re-use of these buildings for commercial purposes has ensured that the physical character of the area has been maintained and developed in keeping with its conservation area status.

If these businesses had not been allowed to provide high quality commercial settings then there is no doubt that the character of the area would have changed and the large detached buildings been under considerable threat of demolition and redevelopment.

In enabling the applicant to expand the current premises the LPA will be ensuring the long-term maintenance of this listed building and retaining the character of the conservation area.

The proposal will ensure the long-term future of the business and it is the applicant's wish to continue to expand and employ more people.

The NPPF and new local plan support economic growth.

Conclusions

The applicant has a problem insofar as the current business is located across three sites. This would be sustainable if the 3 locations were all separate branches of the legal practice. The issue is that one of the locations contains support staff that serve the other two and the costs of this are excessive. Also, there are operational impracticalities with no direct contact between staff.

The application will solve this problem by bringing staff together at an existing site on Hungerford Road. However, it so happens that this site is outside a town centre and policy requires a sequential test. The specific requirements of the applicant have led to a conclusion that it would be impractical to provide a stand-alone administrative service in a town centre location, this is just displacing the problem not solving it. We ask the LPA to be flexible in their consideration of the needs of the applicant and agree that the operational requirements of the applicant mean that it is impossible to find a suitable office anywhere to serve the business.

Notwithstanding this we have carried out a search of the local centres and only applied the parameters of size and quality; we found no suitable premises.

There are also economic and heritage benefits that weigh in favour of approval.

It is our conclusion that the sequential test is passed, and planning permission can be granted.

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RTPI

Chartered Town Planner