

## HERITAGE & PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposal: Conversion of ground floor unit occupied by music school and mainly used for storage to three residential apartments and external works to shopfront

Site address: 1A Lord Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1QA

Client: London Property Investments Ltd

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# HPD

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This statement has been prepared on behalf of London Property Investments Ltd (the Applicant), in support of a full planning application for “Conversion of ground floor unit occupied by music school and mainly used for storage to three residential apartments and external works to shopfront” at 1A Lord Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1QA. The property is located within Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and there are numerous listed buildings nearby.

The main purposes of this statement are to:

- Describe the significance of the affected heritage assets and assess the impact of the proposal upon their significance, in accordance with paragraph 207 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (updated 2024).
- Set out the case in favour of the proposal, drawing upon relevant planning history.

This statement includes hyperlinks to external sources and is designed to be read in electronic PDF format, alongside the architectural plans and drawings by Finline Architectural Design (the Designer).

### Site Location & Description

1A Lord Street is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) [SE 14633 16792](#) in a prominent town centre location at the junction of Lord Street with Beast Market.

The site extends to approximately 250m<sup>2</sup> and is dominated by the footprint of the building, with outdoor space limited to an external ramp and bin storage area beyond the north facing elevation.

### Building Description

1 Lord Street is a three storey (plus attic) late 19<sup>th</sup> century building, constructed from local ashlar stonework with a slate roof (photo 1). It has a distinctive curved facade that positively addresses not only Lord Street and Beast Market but Kirkgate, Venn Street and a number of important surrounding buildings, including the Church of St Peter (grade II\* listed, entry no. [1134977](#)).

The ground floor was designed to accommodate a number of small shop units, perhaps three or four judging by the number of historic door openings. The shopfront has retained some original architectural features and details, including stone pilasters with decorative capitals and a stone cornice over the fascia. However, the painted timber shop windows appear to date from around the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and are lacking in quality and refinement. The first and second floors each have 12 painted timber sliding sash windows, with round arched heads and keystones to the first floor and cambered heads to the second floor. To the eaves, there is a gutter carried by a simple cornice supported by dentils.

In HPD’s opinion it is a well-detailed and crafted building, with the retention of the sash windows reflecting the diligent care of its owner. However, it is let down by the existing poor-quality shop windows.

Photo 1: 1 Lord Street from junction of Lord St with Kirkgate



## Planning History

The application is part of a wider proposal to redevelop the whole of the building, with prior approval being granted for nine apartments to the upper floors on 4 December 2024 (application ref. 2024/92938). A total of 12 apartments are therefore proposed between the two applications.

The current proposal follows on from an earlier proposal, with prior approval being granted for 14 apartments to the upper floors on 25 September 2020 (application ref. 2020/92488), and planning permission being granted for four ground floor apartments on 14 July 2020 (application ref. 2020/62/90306/W).

## The Proposal & Key Changes

The main difference between the current proposals and those approved in 2020 is a reduction from 18 apartments, specifically intended for students, to 12 apartments that are not specifically intended for students or any other group. The apartments proposed have therefore been designed to comply with national space standards<sup>1</sup>.

Externally the proposals for the ground floor are the same as those previously granted planning permission on 14 July 2020 (application ref. 2020/62/90306/W) and include:

- A new and improved painted timber shop windows with some inward opening transom lights and acoustic glazing with mirrored finish to provide occupants with privacy.

- New ashlar stone stall risers in place of timber panelling presently facing Beast Street.
- Insertion of a painted timber sliding sash window, with acoustic glazing, into an existing false window opening to the northern elevation.

Additionally, if recommended by the Noise Consultant, the proposal includes the 'like with like' replacement of windows to the upper floors but incorporating acoustic glass.

## Methods of Research & Investigation

The following has been completed in preparing this report:

- A site visit by HPD on 10 October 2019, which included visiting nearby listed buildings.
- A search of the Heritage List for England and the Historic Environment Record (HER) via the Heritage Gateway and a review of entries for nearby listed buildings.
- Historic Ordnance Survey map regression.
- A review of planning policies set out in *Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies* (adopted 2019) and the NPPF.
- A review of *Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* (October 2024) and *Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area: Shopfront*

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<sup>1</sup> Set out within *Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard* (DCLG, 2015)

*Design Guidance* (October 2024), which are both draft consultation documents.

### **Underuse & Vacancy**

The ground floor of 1 Lord Street was previously let to Halifax Bank who surrendered their lease in February 2013. However, they had not occupied the building themselves for many years and had sub-let the property to unknown tenants, the last of which vacated in June 2010. Once the Applicant regained possession, they sought to lease it for A1, A2, A3 or B1(c) uses but were unsuccessful. In August 2014 it was finally let to the adjacent music school and it continues to be occupied by them and used mainly for storage. Due to the passage of time this use is now the lawful established use. However, for the Applicant this is a temporary use, which is not commercially sustainable due to the low rent received.

Demand for commercial space in this secondary location continues to be very weak in the Applicant's opinion. This is evidenced by the adjoining property at 7 - 9 Beast Market, which is also owned by the Applicant (photo 2). In May 2023 the ground floor of this property became vacant and remains so with very limited interest over the past 20+ months despite marketing efforts that continue.

Turning to the upper floors of 1 Lord Street, the first, second and attic storeys have been let on a short term basis for a low rent but have recently become vacant.

In short, the whole of the building is long-term underused and has been very difficult to let. Existing uses are not commercially viable or capable of funding the building's long-term maintenance and conservation and a new use is therefore required.

## 2.0 IDENTIFICATION OF HERITAGE ASSETS & THEIR INTEREST

### Identification of Heritage Assets

1 Lord Street has been identified by the LPA as a non-designated heritage asset in its own right and HPD agrees with this assessment. In addition, 12 designated heritage assets have been identified by HPD within 50m of the building:

- Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area, which the site is located within, boundary map available.
- 7 and 9 Beast Market, grade II listed, attached to the east of the building, list entry no. [1134415](#) (photo 2).
- Boy and Barrell Inn, Beast Market, grade II listed, circa 12m to the south-east, list entry no. [1313795](#).
- 6 Beast Market, grade II listed, circa 15m to the south-east, list entry no. [1134414](#).
- 33 to 41 Kirkgate, grade II listed, circa 25m to the south-east, list entry nos. [1313503](#) and [1134979](#).
- 11 to 15 Beast Market, grade II listed, circa 30m to the north, list entry no. [1220303](#).
- Church of St Peter, grade II\* listed, located circa 30m to the west, list entry no. [1134977](#) (photo 3) and associated gate arch, grade II listed, circa 50m to the south west, list entry no. [1134978](#).

- The Fleece Public House, grade II listed, circa 40m to the south-west, list entry no. [1313502](#).
- 26 Kirkgate, grade II listed, circa 45m to the south-west, list entry no. [1214692](#).
- 24 Kirkgate, grade II listed, circa 50m to the south-west, list entry no. [1313482](#)

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that there are a considerable number of other listed buildings in the wider area.

Photo 2: 7 - 9 Beast Market (grade II), attached to 1 Lord Street



Photo 3: Church of St Peter (grade II\*) from adjacent to 1 Lord Street



### **Interest: 1 Lord Street**

The LPA has not specifically explained why they consider 1 Lord Street to be a non-designated heritage asset, under the terms of the NPPF. In HPD’s opinion, it is principally because of the building’s exterior quality, completeness (shop windows excluded), the skilled design response to a difficult and prominent site and its positive contribution to the conservation area, that it merits such a status. Its exterior appearance is therefore sensitive and important.

### **Interest: Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area**

Conservation areas are normally designated under section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act 1990) for their “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable

to preserve or enhance” or the preceding legislation set out within chapter 69 of the Civic Amenities Act 1967, which included the same wording.

*Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* was recently published in October 2024 and was subject to consultation in December 2024, prior to adoption. It is a comprehensive document of 161 pages, with the conservation area’s special interest and historic development summarised at pages 8 to 14.

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the following points of particular relevance:

- 1 Lord Street as a key positive building/ non-designated heritage asset.
- Seven character areas with 1 Lord Street being part of the St Peter’s Character Area.
- The Church of St Peter as a grade II\* listed and landmark building.
- Vacancy, including shops and banks, as a key risk to the significance of the conservation area.

Changes to the exterior appearance of 1 Lord Street must be carefully considered as they may affect the building’s positive contribution to the conservation area. However, as reflected by the Conservation Area Appraisal, it is important to note that character has non-visual facets, such as vitality and vibrancy, which would be enhanced by bringing the building back into more active use. Like many town centres Huddersfield is going through a difficult period of change and new viable uses must be found for buildings.

## **Interest: Nearby Listed Buildings**

Paragraph 207 of 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 upon their significance.*

Furthermore, the phrase “setting of a heritage asset” is defined by the NPPF (annex 2, page 78) as:

*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

Since there will be no work to any listed building it is only necessary to understand the contribution made by their settings, with a focus upon the development site itself, since other aspects of their settings will remain unchanged.

In HPD's opinion, 1 Lord Street alone is not integral to the special interest of any nearby listed buildings. Nevertheless, it is a small part of a wider historic and high-quality townscape that makes a clear and positive contribution to their settings and overall interest. Provided that the exterior appearance of 1 Lord Street is upheld, the settings of nearby listed buildings will be maintained. However, in HPD's opinion, changes to the building (either positive or negative) would need to be quite drastic for them to materially affect the significance of nearby listed buildings or appreciation of their significance, although there might be some change to their wider context.

### 3.0 LEGISLATIVE & POLICY CONTEXT

#### Legislation

Section 38 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. Furthermore, sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) impose additional duties that are relevant to the applications made. In essence these require that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings, and the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas.

#### Local Planning Policy

Key Kirklees Local Plan policies include:

- LP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- LP2 – Place shaping
- LP3 – Location of new development
- LP7 – Effective and efficient use of land and buildings
- LP15 – Residential uses in town centres
- LP17 – Huddersfield Town Centre
- LP21 – Highways safety and access
- LP24 – Design
- LP25 – Advertisements and shopfronts
- LP35 – Historic environment

Guidance is also provided by *Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* (October 2024) and *Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area: Shopfront Design Guidance* (October 2024). However, these are both draft

documents that are yet to be finalised following public consultation in December 2024.

#### National Planning Policy

The most relevant NPPF chapters and paragraphs include:

- Chapter 2 – *Achieving sustainable development*, in particular paragraph 11.
- Chapter 5 – *Delivering a sufficient supply of homes*, in particular paragraph 73.
- Chapter 11 – *Making efficient use of land*, in particular paragraphs 124, 125 and 128.
- Chapter 12 – *Achieving well-designed places*, in particular paragraph 135
- Chapter 16 – *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, in particular paragraphs 210 and 219

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT

The main issues, discussed below, are:

- Principle of development
- Visual Impact
- Impact upon heritage assets
- Residential amenity
- Access and highways

### Principle of Development

The Local Plan Policies Map identifies the site as being within Huddersfield Town Centre and Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area. However, it is not within the Primary Shopping Area and is not therefore identified as being part of either a Primary Shop Frontage or Secondary Shop Frontage. Furthermore, the building has been occupied by the adjacent music school for over 10 years and used by them mainly for storage. Consequently, the established lawful use is not a main town centre use and does not have an 'active frontage'.

In-line with Local Plan policy LP3, policy LP7 encourages the re-use, adaptation and efficient use of vacant and underused buildings, and policies LP15 and LP17 support appropriate residential uses within town centres. This position is consistent with and supported by the NPPF, in particular paragraphs 73, 124, 125 and 128.

As concluded by the Officer Report for the application approved in July 2020 (ref. 2020/62/90306/W), the proposal will make a valuable windfall contribution towards meeting housing need in a sustainable town centre location that accords with Local Plan policies and the proposal is acceptable in principle, subject to adequately resolving the matters outlined below.

### Visual Impact

The external alterations proposed to the ground floor are the same as those approved in July 2020.

The previously approved proposal was developed drawing upon advice provided by the Conservation Officer, to ensure that the character, appearance and historic identity of the building is maintained or enhanced, as required by planning policies. As explained in section 1 the existing painted timber shop windows are estimated to date from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, are of fairly poor quality, and are towards the end of their life.

Like the existing shop windows the proposed shop windows are fairly simple, but a number of improvements are made including:

- Omission of inappropriate timber panelling to stall risers and replacement with ashlar stone stall riser to Beast Street frontage.
- Omission of inappropriate transoms.
- Improved division of transom lights (the existing long rectangular panes of glass do not look right).
- Opening transom lights to be flush fitting and inward opening (not 'storm proof' as existing).
- Refinement of timber sections, with the omission of large square section timbers.
- All glazing to be internally beaded.

Some of these improvements are illustrated by photos 4 and 5 below.

Photo 4: Proposed improvements to shopfront



A – Inappropriate panelling replaced with ashlar stall riser

B – Inappropriate transoms omitted

C – Storm proof sashes replaced with flush fitting and division of transom lights improved

D – Inappropriate panelling under fascia removed

E – Inappropriate large square section timbers omitted

Photo 5: Visualisation of proposed shopfront



Additionally, the new window to the existing false window opening in the north elevation, is to be sliding sash with a painted timber finish, as previously approved and requested by the Conservation Officer.

As illustrated by the visualisation above at photo 5, the shop windows are to have a mirrored finish, to provide occupants with privacy and avoid a cluttered appearance, due to visible blinds, curtains, etc. It is believed that the reflections will add some visual interest to the streetscene and that this is the best achievable solution. It will certainly be an improvement upon the paper screening used by the music school.

Waste and recycling bin provision will remain as existing, as indicated by the submitted site plan.

The design solution is the same as previously approved. It has been carefully considered and it is believed that it will achieve an enhancement in visual amenity, due to the improved quality of the shopfront that aligns with the draft Shopfront Design Guidance. It is therefore supported by Local Plan policies LP24, LP25, and NPPF paragraph 135.

### **Impact Upon Heritage Assets**

Section 2 of this report highlights that 1 Lord Street is an undesignated heritage asset in its own right, which occupies a prominent corner site within Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area, in proximity to numerous listed buildings, including the Church of St Peter (grade II\*). Furthermore, it makes a clear positive contribution to the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area and a positive contribution to the wider townscape and context within which nearby listed buildings are experienced and appreciated.

NPPF paragraph 210 states:

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

*a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*

*b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*

*c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

And paragraph 219 states:

*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

The proposal will bring a long-term underused building back into a new and viable use that is consistent with its long-term conservation; make a positive contribution to economic and town centre vitality; and, enhance the character and appearance of the building and its positive contribution to the conservation area and the wider context within which nearby listed building are experienced. It is therefore supported by NPPF paragraphs 210 and 219, and Local Plan policy LP35.

## **Residential Amenity**

### Size & Space Standards

The proposal includes three apartments that are a minimum of 37m<sup>2</sup> and all comply with national space standards. Unlike the previous proposal (application ref. 2020/62/90306/W), which was for four smaller apartments plus a common room, they are not specifically intended for students.

### Privacy

As previously proposed and approved, the shop windows are to be fitted with mirrored glass, which will provide occupants with privacy. Furthermore, the perceived privacy of occupants will be enhanced by using curtains and blinds.

### Noise

It is acknowledged that there are some noise issues in this locality due to vehicular traffic and the night-time economy, which are common in busy town centres. However, as previously proposed and approved, these will be overcome by measures including acoustic glazing. Should any further mitigation be required, the Applicant would be willing to accept an appropriately worded planning condition.

Overall, the proposal will provide occupants with a good standard of residential amenity, in accordance with Local Plan policies LP15(d), LP24(b) and NPPF paragraph 135.

## **Highways & Access**

There is no existing or proposed parking associated with the development site, which is sustainably located within Huddersfield Town Centre. There is no conflict with Local Plan policy LP21.

Level access is provided into the building via an existing shallow gradient ramp.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

In HPD's judgement the proposal:

- Is acceptable in principle and will provide a valuable and efficient windfall contribution towards meeting housing needs in a highly sustainable town centre location.
- Will enhance visual amenity, the character and appearance of the building that is a non-designated heritage asset in its own right, and its positive contribution to Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and the wider context within which nearby listed buildings are experienced.
- Will bring a long-term underused building back into a new and viable use that is consistent with and will provide for its long-term conservation.
- Will make a positive contribution to economic and town centre vitality.
- Will provide occupants with a good standard of residential amenity in proximity to a range of amenities.
- Does not give rise to significant highway concerns.

It therefore complies with the development plan and NPPF, when read as a whole, having had specific regard to Local Plan policies LP2, LP3, LP7, LP15, LP17, LP21, LP24, LP25, LP35, LP51; and, NPPF paragraphs 11, 73, 124, 125, 128, 135, 210 and 219.

The above conclusion is supported by the fact that the proposal is very similar to that granted planning permission on 14 July 2020 (application ref. 2020/62/90306/W). The main difference being a reduction from four apartments (plus common room), which were

specifically intended for students, to three apartments that are not aimed at any specific group. Since the previous approval there have been no material changes to circumstances or planning policies that might justify a different decision. Rather the fact that the lawful established use is no longer a main town centre use with an active frontage, negates some previous concerns about the undesirable loss of such uses.

## 6.0 REFERENCES

DCLG (2015), *Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard*

Kirklees Council, (2019), *Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies*

MHCLG (2024), *National Planning Policy Framework*

Purcell (2024), *Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan – DRAFT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT*

Purcell (2024), *Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area: Shopfront Design Guidance – DRAFT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT*

The National Heritage List for England, list entry numbers given in text, available here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Various space standards adopted by other LPAs, hyperlinks provided in text

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