

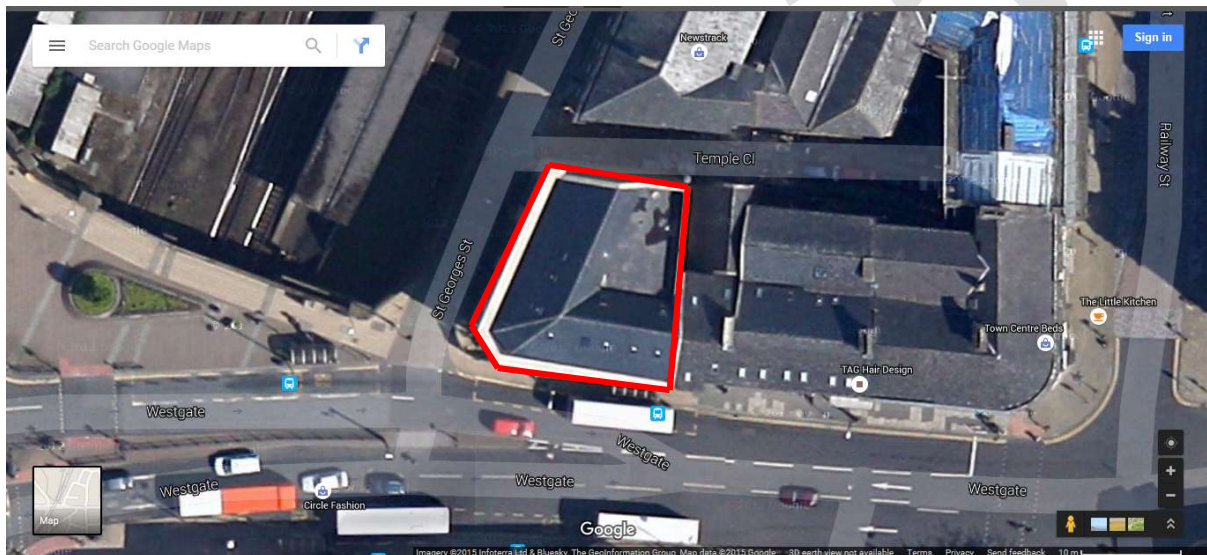
Job reference: 2023 enquiry 47

Address: Department 44,44-48, Westgate, Huddersfield, HD1 1NX

Date: 18-2-2025

Extra notes: **Heritage statement - Variation of condition 2 pursuant of planning application no 2023/62/91871/W was granted on 24-4-2024 to regularise the layout**

CHANGE OF USE FROM RETAIL (EA USE) TO FORM 6no RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS (C3 USE) ON THE GROUND AND BASEMENT FLOORS WITH EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS (WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA)



Aerial view site plan

Introduction

The proposal is related 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 and all other upper floors are unaffected by this proposal. The change of use was recently granted on 24-4-2024, however, prior to commencement on site recently, it was reassessed for the sake of safety and security of the residents. Our clients mentioned that some of their tenants have experienced anti social behaviour and felt intimidated by strangers lurking at the rear entrance since it is tucked away at the rear street.

Therefore for the residents safety, our clients have decided to reconsider the overall layout in order to provide safety to their residents. It was considered that the proposed main entrance to the residential apartments would be better accessed from Westgate frontage rather than to continue and re-use the existing rear access. As a result new layouts have been prepared and also maximise the spaces available on the ground floor and only uses minimum spaces within the basement. The remaining basement will be retained as storage.

Therefore minor amendments have been considered and this is an application to vary condition no2 pursuant of the recent approval planning reference no **2023/62/91871/W** which was granted on **24-4-2024** in order to regularise the layout. These minor changes now does not have to form separate access for the respective residential apartments from outside and hence with little external disruptions. The re-using of the existing entrance on Westgate frontage provides a secured and safer aspect than using the rear tucked away entrance. Therefore these minor changes should not impact visually on the significance.

This application is to be read in conjunction with the previous and recent design and access report and to assess whether there is any impact (if any) or significance from this minor amendment proposals and to ensure that the character and setting of the heritage requirements are not harm. Basically these new fresh proposals complemented the existing department 44 and its upper floors being residential apartment and also provided additional apartments for experiencing the modern town centre living ethos. Most importantly providing a more secured and safe main entrance to the residents off Westgate frontage.

It will allow abit more vitality back with hustle and bustle life into the town centre. The former large shopfront glazing size will provide a lot of natural daylight and views into the residential apartments.

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 fresh 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. This fresh proposals now complemented 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 large ground floor retail space and unused basement retail associated storage space, it is inevitable to form 6no residential apartments which is considered to breathe a fresh use class into the building and creates 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 build of the bus shelter have blocked 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 retail 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 fresh **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 6 no 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
- 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 cause 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. Our clients are keen to bring this fresh layout into reality as soon as possible and seek your support.

Prepared by

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