Lacuna Designs

TK02-02

LP13 Town Centre Assessment

82 Commercial Street, Batley WF17 5DS

Introduction

1. Policy Context – LP13 (Town Centre Uses)
Policy LP13 seeks to:
Protect and enhance town centre vitality and viability
Safeguard main town centre uses
Support appropriate residential development where it does not undermine the role of the centre
Encourage the reuse of under utilised upper floors
The proposal involves the conversion of part of the first floor of No. 82 Commercial Street from office use to a single 2 bedroom residential flat. The remainder of the first floor will remain in office use. The ground floor commercial premises remain unchanged.

2. Nature of the Existing Floorspace
The first floor is currently in office use, accessed via the established shared entrance at No. 84. The Design & Access Statement confirms:
"The existing first floor above No. 82 is currently in office use… The proposal seeks to convert part of the first floor into a self contained 2 bedroom flat, while the remaining accommodation will continue to operate as offices."
This is not primary retail frontage, nor is it a main town centre use that contributes directly to footfall or street level activity.
Upper floor office space is typically considered secondary town centre floorspace, and its partial loss does not materially affect the function of the centre.

3. Impact on Town Centre Vitality and Viability
The proposal does not reduce active ground floor commercial space. All existing commercial uses remain in place.
The introduction of one residential unit supports town centre vitality by:
Increasing natural surveillance
Adding evening activity and passive footfall
Supporting local businesses through additional local spending
Contributing to mixed use balance, which is encouraged by the NPPF for town centres
The Design & Access Statement reinforces this:
"The proposal represents a mixed-use arrangement consistent with the character of Commercial Street and the wider Batley town centre."

4. Sequential Considerations
LP13 requires consideration of whether the existing use could reasonably be retained or relocated. In this case:
The office use is not being lost entirely — only part of the floor is being converted.
The retained office accommodation continues to operate without disruption.
The upper floor is not required for main town centre uses, which are concentrated at ground level.
There is no demand for additional upper floor office space in this location, and the space is better utilised as residential accommodation.
Given the modest scale of the change, a full sequential test is not required, but the above demonstrates compliance with the principles of LP13.

5. Existing Residential Context

There is already an established flat above No. 84, accessed from an adjacent side entrance. This demonstrates:

Residential use is already part of the building's functional mix

The access arrangements are proven and appropriate

The proposal does not introduce a new or incompatible use

The change strengthens the existing mixed use character of the building and street

This further supports compliance with LP13.

6. Scale of Change

The proposal introduces one additional flat only.

This is a minor change in the context of the wider town centre and does not:

Remove any ground floor commercial activity

Reduce the availability of main town centre uses

Affect the centre's retail hierarchy

Conflict with the aims of LP13

7. Conclusion – Compliance with LP13

The proposal fully complies with LP13 because:

It retains ground floor commercial uses

It maintains part of the first floor in office use

It introduces a modest, appropriate residential use that enhances town centre vibrancy

It reuses under utilised upper floors, consistent with the NPPF

It aligns with the mixed use character of Commercial Street

It does not harm town centre vitality, viability, or the supply of main town centre floorspace

The development therefore represents a policy compliant, sustainable and beneficial reuse of upper floor space within Batley town centre.