

# **DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT & PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**1A-1C MANSFIELD ROAD**

**BALDOCK**

**SG7 6EB**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This Design and Access Statement and Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use and conversion of the ground floor restaurant to form 1 no. two-bedroom residential flat together with the replacement of existing timber windows and doors on the ground and first floors with bespoke white uPVC windows and doors at 1A–1C Mansfield Road, Baldock.

The application site comprises a two-storey building located on Mansfield Road within the built-up area of Baldock. The site lies within the Baldock Conservation Area and is situated within the designated Town Centre Area, although it does not form part of any Primary or Secondary Shopping Frontage.

The proposal seeks to secure the continued beneficial use of the building through the conversion of a vacant commercial unit into residential accommodation whilst undertaking sympathetic external alterations that preserve the character and appearance of the existing building.

## **2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site comprises a two-storey building positioned on the northern side of Mansfield Road.

The ground floor has most recently operated as a restaurant and takeaway premises, whilst the upper floor comprises residential accommodation.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of residential and commercial development. Whilst the site lies within the designated Town Centre Area, the northern side of Mansfield Road is predominantly residential in character, with the application property representing the only commercial unit on this side of the street.

The site is located within a highly sustainable location, benefitting from convenient access to local shops, services, public transport and community facilities within Baldock Town Centre.

## **3. THE PROPOSAL**

Planning permission is sought for:

- Change of use and conversion of the existing ground floor restaurant to form 1 no. two-bedroom self-contained residential flat.

- Replacement of existing timber windows and doors on the ground and first floors with bespoke white uPVC windows and doors.

No alterations are proposed to the footprint, scale, height or overall form of the building.

The proposed windows and doors will be manufactured to match the size, proportions and opening styles of the existing timber units. No glazing bars are present within the existing design and therefore none are proposed.

Any replacement brickwork or weatherboarding required as part of the works will match the existing materials to ensure continuity of appearance.

#### **4. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The site lies within Baldock Town Centre and within the built-up area of the settlement where residential development is generally supported by both local and national planning policy.

The proposal involves the conversion of an existing vacant commercial unit to residential use. The former restaurant premises has been vacant since April 2026 and the proposal provides an opportunity to bring the accommodation back into productive use.

Importantly, the site does not form part of any designated Primary or Secondary Shopping Frontage and therefore the proposal would not result in the loss of protected retail frontage or undermine the retail function of the town centre.

The proposal represents the efficient reuse of an existing building within a highly sustainable location and will contribute towards local housing supply whilst ensuring the continued occupation and maintenance of the property.

The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable.

#### **5. DESIGN AND APPEARANCE**

The proposal retains the existing building in its entirety and involves only limited external alterations.

The replacement windows and doors have been carefully designed to replicate the appearance of the existing units. The proposed windows will maintain the existing opening arrangements, proportions and overall design.

The visual impact of the proposals will therefore be minimal and the established appearance of the building will be preserved.

Where replacement brickwork or weatherboard cladding is required, materials will match the existing building to ensure a consistent appearance.

The proposal therefore accords with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

## **6. HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION AREA**

The site lies within the Baldock Conservation Area.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on decision-makers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.

The proposal does not involve demolition, extensions or alterations to the overall form of the building.

Whilst replacement windows and doors are proposed, these have been specifically designed to match the existing openings and opening styles. The visual appearance of the building will therefore remain substantially unchanged.

The existing timber windows are in poor condition and their replacement will improve the long-term maintenance and energy efficiency of the building.

Furthermore, a number of neighbouring properties within the immediate street scene already contain white uPVC windows. The proposed replacement units will therefore reflect an established feature within the local context.

The proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and accords with Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the heritage objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **7. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY**

The proposed flat will provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers.

The development benefits from:

- Adequate internal floorspace.
- Good levels of natural daylight.
- Multiple windows serving all habitable rooms.
- Adequate outlook.

The site is located on the northern side of Mansfield Road where surrounding properties are predominantly residential in character.

The former restaurant represents the only commercial premises on this side of Mansfield Road and the proposed residential use is therefore considered entirely compatible with surrounding land uses.

Refuse storage will remain as existing.

Cycle storage for two bicycles will be provided within the rear amenity area.

The proposal therefore complies with Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

## **8. ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS**

No alterations are proposed to existing access arrangements.

The site occupies a highly sustainable location within walking distance of shops, services, employment opportunities and public transport facilities.

The proposal represents a modest residential conversion and is not expected to result in any material highway impacts.

Secure cycle storage is provided to encourage sustainable modes of travel.

## **9. PARKING AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

The proposed dwelling will not be provided with any dedicated off-street parking spaces.

This approach is considered entirely appropriate given the site's highly sustainable location within Baldock Town Centre. Future occupiers will have immediate access to a wide range of day-to-day facilities, including shops, services, employment opportunities, healthcare facilities, restaurants and public transport links, all within comfortable walking distance of the site.

Baldock Railway Station is located within walking distance of the property and provides regular services to London, Cambridge and other destinations, reducing reliance on the private motor vehicle. The site is also well served by local bus services and benefits from established pedestrian and cycle connections throughout the town.

The proposal involves the conversion of an existing building rather than the creation of a new standalone residential development. Given the sustainable location and accessibility of the site, it is considered that future occupants can reasonably meet many of their daily needs without the requirement for a private vehicle.

Furthermore, secure cycle storage for two bicycles will be provided within the rear amenity area, encouraging sustainable travel choices and reducing dependence upon private car ownership.

The absence of dedicated parking provision is therefore considered acceptable and reflects the site's highly accessible town centre location, where national and local planning policy seeks to encourage sustainable patterns of development and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

## **10. SUSTAINABILITY**

The proposal makes effective use of an existing building and avoids the need for new build development on undeveloped land.

The conversion will secure the continued occupation and maintenance of the property whilst improving the thermal performance of the building through the installation of modern replacement windows and doors.

The site's location within Baldock Town Centre allows future occupants to access day-to-day services without reliance on private vehicles.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

The proposal represents a sustainable and appropriate form of development that will secure the beneficial reuse of a vacant commercial unit through its conversion into a high-quality two-bedroom dwelling.

The development will not adversely affect the role or function of Baldock Town Centre, will preserve the character and appearance of the Baldock Conservation Area and will provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers.

The proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. Planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.