

M Scott / Architectural Design

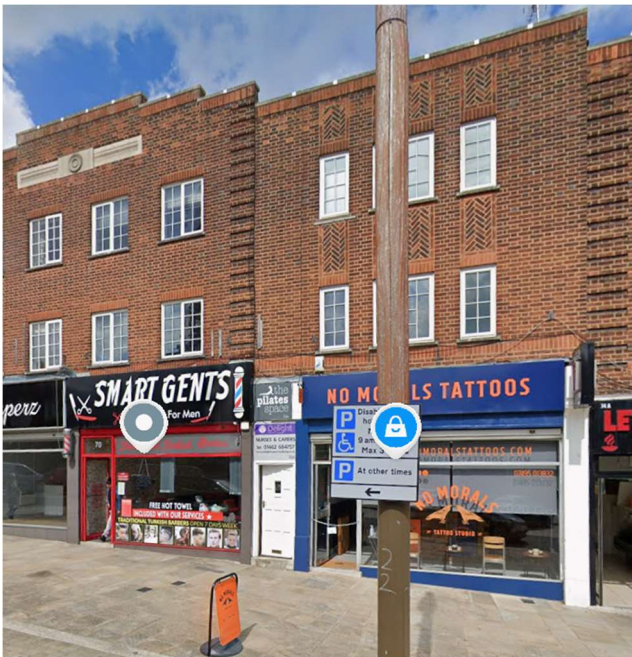
Design and Access Statement_Rev B

For

Change of use of first and second floor from Commercial (Use Class E) to Residential (Use Class C3) to provide two self-contained flats including alterations to fenestration and cycle and bin storage

At

70A Lays Avenue, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3EG



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the first and second floor from Commercial (Use Class E) to Residential (Use Class C3) to provide two self-contained flats including alterations to fenestration and cycle and bin storage at 70A Lays Avenue, Letchworth Garden City.
- 1.2. The ground floor will remain unchanged and continue in commercial use, preserving the active frontage and existing town centre function of the building. The upper floors are currently vacant or becoming vacant, and the proposal will bring this accommodation back into productive long-term use.
- 1.3. The site lies within Letchworth Garden City Town Centre, where an Article 4 Direction removes permitted development rights for the change of use from Class E to Class C3. Accordingly, full planning permission is required.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1. The application site comprises a three-storey mixed-use building located within Letchworth Town Centre.



Google Maps Satellite – site highlighted with red dot

- 2.2. The ground floor contains two commercial units with a centrally positioned entrance providing independent access to the upper floors. These arrangements are retained as part of the proposal.

3. Proposed Development, Design and Residential Amenity

- 3.1. The proposal seeks the conversion of the existing upper floors to provide:
 - One two-bedroom/ 4 person flat at first-floor level.
 - One three-bedroom/ 5 person flat at second-floor level.
- 3.2. Both flats:

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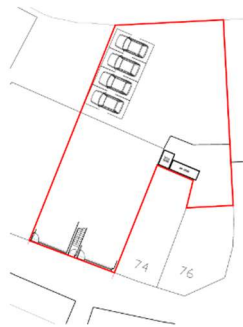
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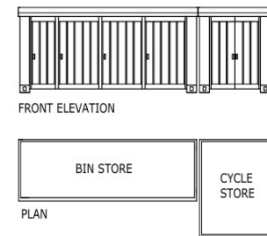
- provide well-designed residential accommodation with good levels of natural light, practical internal layouts and generous living spaces suitable for long-term occupation.
 - include generous open-plan kitchen and living areas together with well-proportioned bedrooms suitable for modern residential occupation.
 - exceed the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards.
- 3.3. Whilst the proposed flats do not include private external amenity space, the site is located within Letchworth Garden City Town Centre, approximately 0.1 miles from Howard Park and Gardens, providing convenient access to public open space.
- 3.4. Four off-street parking spaces will be provided to the rear of the property, together with secure cycle storage and refuse storage to serve the proposed dwellings. These are accessed from Openshaw Way.



Photograph of Rear of the Site

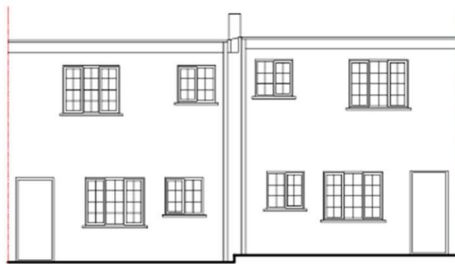


Proposed Site Plan

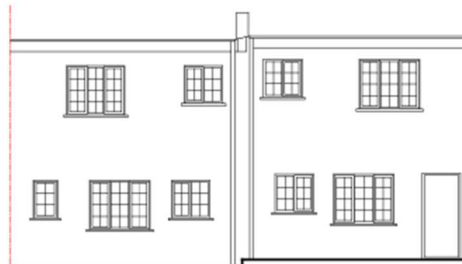


Proposed Bin and Cycle Store

- 3.5. The proposal has been designed to work within the existing building envelope. The only external alteration is the replacement of an existing rear doorway with a window to improve natural daylight to the proposed kitchen. All other existing openings are retained without alteration.



Existing Rear Elevation



Proposed Rear Elevation

- 3.6. Existing access arrangements remain unchanged.

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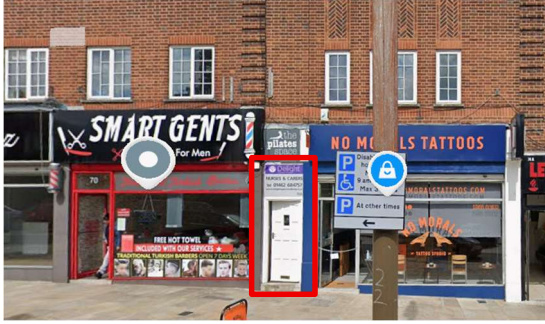
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Photograph of Existing Access – doorway highlighted with red box

- 3.7. Internal layouts have been designed to retain existing drainage routes where possible, with bathrooms located adjacent to existing WC facilities and kitchens positioned close to existing kitchenette locations, minimising alterations to the building fabric.
- 3.8. The proposal does not alter the relationship between neighbouring properties and is not considered to give rise to any material impacts on neighbouring residential amenity.
- 3.9. The proposal represents the sensitive conversion of existing upper floor accommodation with minimal external and internal alteration.
- 3.10. The existing commercial uses at ground floor level are retained, maintaining the character and vitality of the street frontage whilst bringing vacant or underutilised upper floors into beneficial residential use.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1. The proposal makes efficient use of an existing town centre building by introducing two new dwellings while retaining the established commercial use at ground floor level.
- 4.2. The second floor is currently vacant and the existing first-floor Pilates studio is due to surrender their lease and a replacement commercial occupier has not been secured. The proposal therefore provides an opportunity to bring the upper floors back into productive use whilst maintaining the active commercial frontage at ground floor level.
- 4.3. The proposal represents the efficient reuse of an existing building in a sustainable town centre location, delivering two new homes while retaining the active commercial frontage and making effective use of previously developed land.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The proposal provides the sensitive conversion of the existing upper floors to two high-quality residential flats while retaining the ground floor commercial units.
- 5.2. External alterations are minimal, the existing access arrangements are retained, and the development makes effective use of the existing building. The proposal also provides off-street parking, secure cycle storage and refuse storage to serve the new dwellings.

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- 5.3. The proposal provides two high-quality dwellings through the reuse of existing upper floor accommodation in a sustainable town centre location. It is considered to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan, and planning permission is respectfully sought.

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