

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks permission for the change of use of the first floor and rear part of the ground floor accommodation from Class E (commercial) to C3 Residential use to provide 3 no flats.

The site is located on the northern side of Station Road. It is located within the Letchworth Conservation Area.

SITE PHOTOS



View across station road



View from south east towards site



Rear Yard



View from west



Rear yard and adjacent building at 8-10



Internal view at first floor level

USE AND AMOUNT

The building comes under Class E use currently, with the last use being a bank.

The proposed use for the application is residential use, with 2no 2 bedroom flats proposed and 1no 1 bedroom flat. All flats provide space in excess of the recognised national space standards.

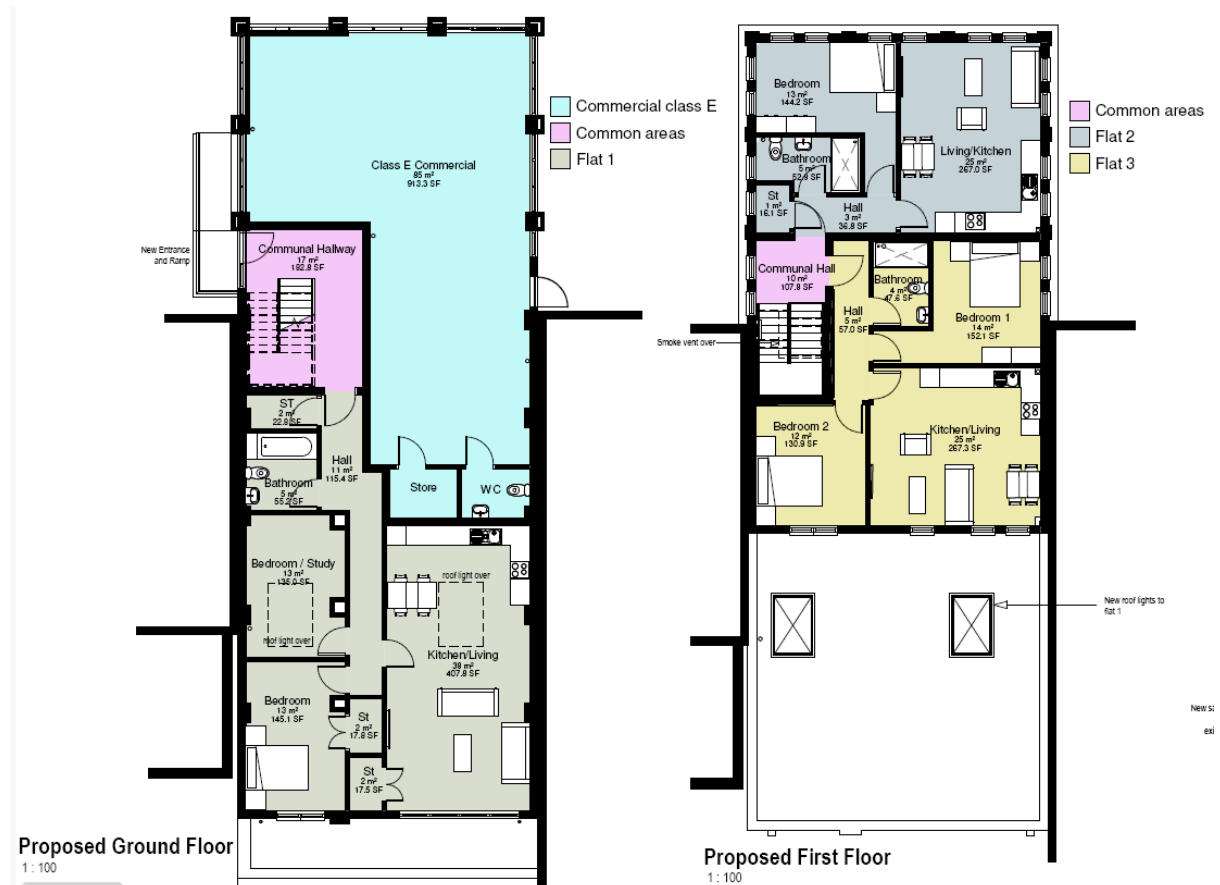
The ground floor frontage will remain in commercial use, which is a 'secondary' frontage as part of Letchworth Town Centre.

LAYOUT

The ground floor frontage is proposed to remain which will result in no significant changes to the appearance of the building and maintaining and active frontage on a secondary shopping frontage.

A new entrance is introduced on the eastern flank elevation, providing access to a communal staircase. A ground floor flat is provided to the rear of the building and two flats on the first floor. One at the front and one at the rear of the building.

The flats are arranged to facilitate the re-use of the existing windows where possible. Generous living/kitchen spaces are provided.



SCALE AND APPEARANCE

The proposals make little change to the appearance or scale of the building. The only change of note is the introduction of a new entrance and ramp on the east elevation and a roof light to provide smoke ventilation to the common staircase. Both of which impact on secondary elevations of the building. The new entrance screen follows the existing fenestration pattern and the new ramp will follow the existing palette of materials with black painted render to the low level walls.

The existing windows will be retained or replaced with windows of similar character. If the existing are retained, it is anticipated that secondary glazing will be provided behind this to improve thermal and acoustic performance.



ACCESS

Flats will be accessed via the new entrance and staircase accessed via a new ramp on the east elevation. The ground floor flat can provide more accessible accommodation without residents requiring to use the stairs.

The site is sustainably located, very close to the railway station and close to all the town centre facilities. As such occupants will have little need for a private car. The site does not have its own off-street parking provision.

Refuse storage will be in the communal yard to the rear of the building. This duplicates the existing arrangements for adjacent properties.

Two parking spaces are proposed. It is intended these are for the use of the ground floor commercial use. The flats are sustainably located close to train and bus routes as well as the provision of cycle storage.

IMPACT ON THE CONSERVATION AREA

The minimal external changes mean the proposals will have little to no impact on the character of the conservation area. A new entrance door will be provided integrated with the existing architecture.

SUSTAINABILITY

Passive Design and fabric Performance:.

The orientation of the building is determined mostly by the existing form.

External walls and roofs will be insulated to modern standards to minimise heat losses and windows replaced with new double glazing or secondary glazing behind the existing windows. The installation of new internal linings and windows will improve the air tightness of the building.

The south facing flat has windows on three sides, enabling scope for cross ventilation when necessary.

Energy calculations and predicted EPC's will be prepared at the construction drawings stage of the project.

Low Carbon Energy

Given the conservation area location, it is assumed that pV panels will not be welcomed on this site. However, there is scope for panels to be fitted on the east and west roof slopes if desired. Solar tiles in the shape of clay plain tiles are not as discrete as 'slates', so this, along with the additional cost and relatively poor performance rule this out as a practical solution.

The method of heating has not yet been determined. In order to achieve an EPC rating of C or higher, it is expected that this will either need to be by gas boiler or heat pump. With the flats on the rear of the building, locating a heat pump on the rear elevation will not be a significant issue. The flat on the front elevation may need a pump to be located on the front yard if this strategy is adopted.

Other low carbon strategies may be considered in the technical design development of the scheme.

Minimising Carbon Footprint

the re-use of the existing structure will mean the embodied carbon of the development will be less than comparable new-build schemes. The additional insulation for the building fabric will reduce the operational carbon as much as possible.

Construction waste will be managed to sort materials for recycling etc.

Healthy Placemaking

The proposals make use of an existing historic building in a sustainable location with a good access to local facilities and public spaces. The new flats will also contribute the vitality of the town centre. Close proximity to public transport and cycle storage, minimises future occupants reliance on the private car.

Promoting Bio-diversity

The site is completely covered in building and hardstanding. As such there is limited scope to enhance the bio-diversity of the site. As such, no tree survey or ecological reports have been procured. The scheme is below the threshold for compliance with Bio-diversity Net Gain requirements.

Sustainable Travel and Air Quality

the site is sustainably located close to Letchworth Railway station and bus stops and cycle storage is provided on site, reducing the reliance on the private car for future occupiers and to the benefit of local air quality.

Conserving Water

The project will be subject to the building regulations requirement of a water usage of a maximum of 110 litres per person per day.

Incorporating Sustainable Drainage.

the site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not considered at risk of flooding. It is proposed to re-use the existing drainage for the surface water drainage, which is believed to connect into existing drains. The proposals do not increase the footprint of the building or increase the current situation. Parking areas can be laid with permeable paving subject to the viability of this.

CONCLUSIONS

The application makes use of existing accommodation in a highly sustainable location to provide 3no new dwellings. The commercial use on the secondary shopping frontage is retained.

Changes to the external appearance are minimal and sympathetic to the existing building and the wider conservation area.