

DESIGN ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

for

CONVERSION OF OFFICE TO
SINGLE DWELLING

at

**The Malt House
27 Kneesworth Street
Royston
Herts
SG8 5AB**

2970 / Doc / 01

REVISION A

ALLEN SMITH ASSOCIATES

Architectural Planning and Design

Tel : 01763 – 247400 01485 297049 – E mail : arcitek@allensmith.co.uk

DESIGN ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Re: Office to residential conversion (B1 to C3). Resubmitted scheme.

This design statement is relative in detail to the aims of the planning application it accompanies and is produced to highlight matters and support the proposed scheme.

History:

Under the address of 27 Kneesworth Street there are two, part brick and part timber frame attached properties under separate ownership. The first is known as The Barn, 27 Kneesworth Street and is located directly to the rear of 31 Kneesworth Street, the second is known as The Malt House, 27 Kneesworth Street and it is the latter that forms the subject of the application and this statement. The point of reference is for clarity relative to the listing.

Both the properties are Listed buildings and within the Conservation area. The original Listing covering both No. 1102040 and is referred to as below.

5255 KNEESWORTH STREET (East Side) Barn, former stables occupied by H Kerr, (Motor Body Repairs) behind No 31) TL 3540 1/139 II 2. Early C17, formerly Stables of the Royal Household. Timber frame, red brick nogging. 6 bay roof truss; where visible has wind braces, tie and collar beams. Included partly for historical interest.

Since the allocation of the listing and the use as a motor body repair business the property has been used for furniture storage and repair from 1984 and subsequently office space since the implementation of a 1991 approval.

Previous approved applications –

84/00464/1 – Change of use from motor works to furniture storage and repair
87/00708/1 – Conversion of barns to residential and office with additional dwellings
1/757/87 – Application for variation to above.
90/00121/1LB – Application for variation to above
91/00046/1LB – Conversion of barns to offices
21/01695/FP & 21/01696/LBC – Conversion of offices to residential

The Proposal

The latter two applications noted above (21/01695/FP & 21/01696/LBC – Conversion of offices to residential,) are still valid but have an expiry date of 10th September 2024. The approved work has not as yet been carried out in any form as the clients have had concerns on political stability and market uncertainties but are now looking to do so in the near future albeit after the expiry of current consents.

Therefore, in advance of expiry of those current approvals, the original documents and application details are being resubmitted for approval.

We would point out that there is no change to the submission of the previous approved application and all plans are included without alteration.

In support of the proposal the following information is still relevant to consider -

The proposal is for the change of use of the Malt House (B1) in its entirety to Residential as a single dwelling use (C3).

In terms of planning policy and permitted development there exists 'Prior Approval' for the conversion and change of use from B1 office to C3 residential establishing a principle of approval in this respect, subject to policy specifics.

The policy specifics in this case are that the building subject of the application is Grade 2 listed and located within the Royston conservation area dictating that planning approval is required for the change of use.

Principle of development

The principal consideration is the design and impact of the proposed development on the listed building, the character and appearance of the surrounding area, together with the living conditions of owners and adjoining occupiers.

- The scheme provides for a 3 bedroom property with no change to the external façade and has 3 parking spaces to the front. All room sizes are generous and provide a good standard of accommodation for the end user with natural lighting and ventilation to all habitable rooms.
- Internally the proposal does not impact on the historic building fabric, the main core / layout of the structure is retained, with only alterations to the modern stud partition walls installed at the time of the conversion to offices.
- As there are no changes to the appearance of the building it will therefore have no impact on the surrounding area or neighbouring occupiers more than the impact it already has.
- Parking and highway impact is improved due to the reduced office parking and change to residential traffic movements.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021) has a presumption in favour of sustainable development on the proviso that any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the framework taken as a whole”.

The development is sustainable. It is in an accessible location, close to the railway station and a short walk to the town centre High Street, Royston Heath and the Priory Park, without the need for additional transportation.

The application site is situated within the town where the Council will normally permit development provided the proposal meets the aims of other relevant policies, we believe that it clearly meets those policy aims.

While the development has a lack of amenity space it is well served and located for Royston Heath and Priory Park.

The site does not fall within a Flood Risk Area but is within the conservation area.

Parking requirements are not affected by the change of use.

Planning Policy:

The proposals are in accordance with - North Hertfordshire Residential Guidelines and standards LP57 and have been considered with the policies below.

Policies -

SECN 12 – Well designed places to live in
SECN5 Delivering sufficient supply of homes.
LP8 Development in Towns
XD1 – Sustainable development
XD3 Protecting Living Conditions
XSP8 Housing
XT2 Parking

Planning Considerations:

- Living conditions of neighbours
- Any harm caused to the character and appearance of the area and street scene.
- Any harm to trees of amenity value.
- Future use

The proposal is such that it is of a size not dissimilar to other properties within this locality which have already been converted from office to residential use and is not disproportionate for the position of the property.

There are no changes to the street scene by virtue of the conversion and the property is set well back from the commercial frontage, surrounded on other immediate boundaries by residential use.

There is no detrimental impact on the attached adjoining office use building, the relationship of the use classes are no different to the relationship that the

building the subject of the application currently has on the surrounding residential properties.

The proposed change of use would result in harmony with the adjoining residential use of The Old Palace as the access to that property and gardens are from the private access off Kneesworth Street directly opposite The Malt House.

There are no trees that would suffer by a result of this development.

We would consider that while any suitable use for a listed building would help sustain it for the future, a more personal residential use is likely to provide an enhancement in long term future use. In conjunction with policy SECN5 (delivering sufficient supply of homes), we believe The Local Planning Authority can currently only demonstrate a reduced supply of deliverable housing sites short of that required and while not a multi property site, this development would contribute to target figures.

Impact on Heritage Assets:

Immediate Heritage Assets are –

- The Barn, 27 Kneesworth Street (UID 1102040) Grade 2
- The Old Palace, 23 Kneesworth Street (1295658) Grade 1
- 31 Kneesworth Street (1347639) Grade 2
- 35 – 41 Kneesworth Street (1295663) Grade 2

As described elsewhere, The Malt House, the subject of this application is an existing grade 2 listed building with no proposed changed to external façades, it already benefits from external parking which will be retained therefore, its impact on acknowledged Heritage Assets will remain as it is at the moment with no additional impact. Similarly, there is no additional impact on the immediate Conservation Area.

The use as a residence would reduce the daily traffic movements and with a permanent occupancy, opposed to the 'office hours' provide an increased level of security to the benefit of The Old Palace (common access) and to the adjoining Barn offices.

The impact of internal alterations on The Malt House own Heritage Asset is not in question as the fabric of the historic building is unchanged. It is only the removal / alteration of non-structural modern stud walls erected in the 1991 approval that are proposed. Arguably by the removal of these walls in part it is returning the structure back to a more open space.

Conclusion:

In concluding we would consider that the principle of residential use is acceptable having due consideration for the town centre location and the mixed residential / commercial uses in the immediate area.

It should also be noted that the Conservation Officer in his consultation response of 04.08.21, when considering the previously approved application, 21/01696/LBC, considered that the changes made were welcomed and were unobjectionable.

His recommendation was –

“It is considered that the scheme (as amended) and subject to the above conditions will not occasion harm to the listed building. I, therefore, raise NO OBJECTION on the basis that the proposal would satisfy the provisions of Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy HE1 : Designated Heritage Assets, of the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Incorporating the Proposed Main Modifications (November 2018) and further Proposed Modifications (May 2021).”

The current application is identical to that approved under 21/01696/LBC

In these circumstances, it is maintained that the proposal would accord with the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan policies and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. It is not considered to have an unreasonable detrimental impact on residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers. It is therefore hoped that the Council will recognise the benefits of this development, and grant Planning Permission in due course.

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