

Design & Access Statement

Design and Access Statement

Studio JMA

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**19 Central St, Ramsbottom, Bury,
BL0 9AF**

01

Introduction & Site Context

Introduction

The application site relates to an existing two-storey former veterinary practice located on Central Street, Ramsbottom, within the designated Ramsbottom Conservation Area.

The building is of traditional masonry construction and forms part of a wider terrace, contributing to the historic character of the street. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of commercial uses at ground floor level, with residential accommodation above, reflecting the established mixed-use nature of Ramsbottom town centre.

The existing building has been subject to limited maintenance over time and presents an opportunity for sensitive refurbishment and enhancement. The current layout, as shown on the existing plans, comprises of a single commercial unit at ground floor with ancillary space above.

The site is sustainably located within a defined town centre, with good access to local services, public transport, and pedestrian routes.



02

Proposed Development

Design Considerations

Proposed Development

The proposed development seeks to:

- Subdivide the existing ground floor into two smaller commercial units
- Convert the upper floors to form two self-contained apartments, 1 no. one bedroom and 1 no. two bedroom.
- Introduce a rear dormer extension to facilitate usable residential accommodation
- Undertake an external refurbishment to enhance the overall appearance of the building

The proposed layouts are illustrated on the submitted plans .

Ground Floor – Commercial Use

The subdivision of the ground floor into two units (each approx. 62 sqm) reflects the scale and grain of surrounding town centre units and supports:

- Increased flexibility for local businesses
- Greater likelihood of occupation
- Active frontage retention

This approach aligns with the prevailing pattern of smaller commercial units within Ramsbottom.

Proposed Development

Upper Floors – Residential Conversion

The introduction of one 1-bedroom apartment provides and one 2-bedroom apartment:

- Efficient use of underutilised upper floors
- Additional town centre housing
- A layout that respects the existing building envelope

Each unit has been designed to provide:

- Defined living/kitchen areas
- Separate bedrooms
- Adequate storage and sanitary provision

Dormer Extension (Rear Elevation)

The proposed dormer is located to the rear and is designed to:

- Sit subservient within the roof form
- Be visually contained from primary public viewpoints
- Provide necessary headroom for compliant residential accommodation

As shown on the proposed elevations , the dormer is finished in dark composite cladding, ensuring a recessive appearance.

Proposed Development

Design Development

The design has evolved through a careful assessment of the existing building, its condition, and its position within the Ramsbottom Conservation Area. The proposals seek to balance viable reuse with a sensitive and proportionate architectural response.

Scale and Proportion

The proposed development retains the overall scale and massing of the existing building, ensuring that its relationship with the surrounding terrace and street scene remains unchanged.

At ground floor level, the subdivision into two commercial units respects the established rhythm of narrower frontages typical within Ramsbottom town centre. The retained structural openings and proportions ensure that the building continues to read as part of a cohesive streetscape.

At roof level, the introduction of a rear dormer has been carefully designed to remain subservient to the host building. As shown on the proposed sections and elevations , the dormer:

- Sits below the primary ridge line
- Is set within the existing roof form
- Does not project beyond the established building envelope in a way that would appear dominant contrary to existing dormer structures which would be removed as part of the proposal

The front elevation remains largely unaltered , ensuring that the building's contribution to the conservation area is preserved. The overall composition, including window hierarchy and proportions, is maintained.

Proposed Development

Materials and Aesthetic

The material strategy has been developed to both enhance the existing building and ensure that new elements are clearly legible yet recessive.

Key principles include:

- Retention and repair of existing masonry elements where possible
- Introduction of black UPVC windows to provide a consistent and contemporary finish
- Use of flush conservation rooflights to minimise visual impact at roof level
- Application of through-colour render to the gable elevation to unify previously inconsistent materials
- The dormer clad in dark composite materials, allowing it to visually recede within the roofscape

As indicated on the proposed elevations , the palette is intentionally restrained. The darker tones at roof level reduce prominence, while improvements at façade level enhance the overall appearance without competing with neighbouring properties.

This approach ensures that the development reads as a refinement and repair of the existing building, rather than an overly assertive intervention.

Proposed Development

Impact on Neighbours (Privacy, Outlook and Amenity)

The proposals have been carefully considered in terms of their impact on neighbouring properties.

Overlooking and Privacy

The development does not introduce significant new overlooking opportunities:

- Openings to the front elevation remain consistent with the existing arrangement
- Rear-facing dormer windows are positioned within the established building envelope and do not directly overlook neighbouring private amenity spaces in a manner that would be materially harmful
- The relationship with adjacent properties reflects typical town centre conditions

Outlook and Daylight

The overall scale and massing of the building remain unchanged, and therefore:

- There is no material increase in overshadowing
- The dormer extension, being located to the rear and contained within the roof slope, does not result in a dominant or overbearing form

General Amenity

The introduction of residential use above commercial is consistent with the established mixed-use character of the area. The scale of the units and intensity of use are modest and appropriate to the location.

Overall, the proposals are considered to have a neutral to positive impact on neighbouring amenity, particularly when weighed against the benefits of bringing the building back into active and improved use.

03

Planning & Policy

Planning & Policy

The proposed development has been assessed against the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposals are considered to accord with the Development Plan when read as a whole and deliver a sustainable form of development within a defined town centre location.

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and promotes the effective use of land, particularly previously developed sites in sustainable locations.

The proposal accords with key NPPF objectives by:

- Supporting the vitality and viability of town centres (Chapter 7)
- Making efficient use of an existing building
- Delivering high-quality design (Chapter 12)
- Preserving and enhancing the historic environment (Chapter 16)
-

In heritage terms, paragraph 208 confirms that where development results in less than substantial harm, this should be weighed against public benefits.

In this instance, any perceived harm is clearly outweighed by:

- Bringing a vacant/underutilised building back into active use
- Enhancing the building's appearance
- Supporting town centre economic activity
- Providing additional housing in a sustainable location

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Planning & Policy

Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

Built Environment and Conservation Policy EN1 – Built Environment

Policy EN1 requires development to:

- Be compatible with the surrounding area
- Reflect local character, scale and appearance
- Use appropriate materials

The proposal complies with EN1 by:

- Retaining the existing building form and proportions
- Respecting the established streetscape along Central Street
- Introducing a restrained and appropriate material palette
- Enhancing the visual quality of the building

Policy EN2 – Conservation Areas Policy EN2 states that development within conservation areas should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

The proposal satisfies this policy as:

- The primary elevation is largely retained and improved, maintaining its contribution to the street scene
- Alterations are focused to the rear elevation, limiting visibility from public vantage points
- The dormer is designed to be subservient and visually recessive
- External improvements (render, windows, roof works) enhance the building's overall condition

The scheme represents a clear enhancement over the existing poorly maintained condition and therefore complies fully with Policy EN2.

Planning & Policy

Design Quality Policy H2 – The Form of New Residential Development

Policy H2 requires residential development to:

- Be appropriate in scale and layout
- Provide a satisfactory living environment
- Integrate with surrounding uses

The proposed apartments:

- Are modest in scale and appropriate to the building
- Provide functional and well-defined internal layouts
- Reflect the established pattern of residential accommodation above commercial premises

Policy S4 – Ramsbottom Town Centre Policy S4 supports development that:

- Maintains and enhances the vitality and viability of Ramsbottom
- Encourages a mix of uses within the centre

The proposal directly supports this policy by:

- Retaining active commercial uses at ground floor level
- Introducing smaller units aligned with modern occupier demand
- Bringing upper floors into residential use
- Increasing activity and footfall within the town centre

Planning & Policy

Policy EC3 – Retention of Local Shops Policy EC3 supports the retention and viability of local shopping provision.

The subdivision of the existing unit:

- Improves the likelihood of occupation
- Provides more flexible commercial space
- Supports local economic activity

Overall Planning Balance

When assessed against the Development Plan as a whole, the proposal:

- Complies with Policies EN1 and EN2 by preserving and enhancing the conservation area
- Meets Policies H2 and H3 by delivering appropriate residential accommodation without harm to amenity
- Supports Policies S4 and EC3 by strengthening the vitality and function of Ramsbottom town centre

Any limited heritage impact associated with the rear dormer is less than substantial and is clearly outweighed by the significant public benefits of:

- Regeneration of an underutilised building
- Visual enhancement of the property
- Provision of new housing
- Support for local businesses

04

Access & Conclusion

Access

The proposals have been developed with consideration for safe, convenient and inclusive access for all users, having regard to the constraints of the existing building and its town centre location.

Site Access and Movement

The site is located on Central Street within Ramsbottom town centre and benefits from:

- Direct access to an established pedestrian route
- Proximity to local services and facilities
- Good connectivity to public transport

The existing access arrangements are retained, ensuring continuity with the established movement patterns in the area.

Commercial Access

Access to the ground floor commercial units is provided directly from Central Street.

- Entrances are clearly defined and legible from the street
- The subdivision into two units maintains an active frontage
- Level access can be achieved or retained at ground floor level, subject to detailed design

This approach ensures that the commercial units remain fully accessible and functional within a town centre context.

Residential Access

The residential accommodation is accessed via a dedicated entrance and stair core, separate from the commercial units.

- This provides clear distinction between uses
- Ensures secure and independent access for residents
- Reflects typical arrangements for mixed-use buildings within Ramsbottom

The internal circulation is simple and logical, with direct access to each apartment from the stair.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The proposed development at 19 Central Street represents a carefully considered and policy-compliant scheme that delivers the sensitive reuse of an existing building within the Ramsbottom Conservation Area.

The proposals:

- Retain and enhance the building's contribution to the street scene
- Introduce a high-quality mixed-use arrangement, combining commercial and residential uses
- Support the vitality and viability of Ramsbottom town centre
- Deliver new residential accommodation in a sustainable location
- Improve the overall appearance and condition of the property

The design has been developed to ensure that any changes, particularly at roof level, are subservient, well-considered, and limited in visual impact, preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area.

In planning terms, the scheme is fully aligned with both the Bury Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, and delivers clear public benefits.

Overall, the proposals represent a positive and sustainable form of development, and there are no material considerations that would justify withholding planning permission.