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Design and Access, and Planning Statement

Change of use from offices to 9 one bed apartments, with internal and external alterations to include replacement doors, provision of bicycle/bin storage at rear, and new boundary wall and gates at rear at 18-20 St Marys Place Bury.



Applicant: Henmort Limited

Date: 20th February 2023

This statement has been produced to accompany a planning application and listed buildings application for a change of use of the premises to 9 one bedroom apartments, internal and external alterations to include replacement doors, and provision of bicycle/bin storage at rear and new boundary wall and gates at rear.

Photographs of the existing property are included in appendix 1.

1 - EXISTING USE

The application relates to two adjoining end terraced properties (circa 1845) within the grade II listed row encompassing 2-20 St Mary's Place and located within the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area. The terrace is mainly two storeys but with areas of cellars and useable roof space to the front of the properties.

It is understood that the property was formally 2 dwellings built in the late Georgian style with red/orange brickwork and slate roofs. Each property is two bays wide incorporating three windows with stone heads and cills, and doorways abutting centrally with ornamental fanlights and brick arches.

The properties have been extended with two storeys outriggers at the rear, all roofs are pitched with slate coverings.

The properties front directly onto the public footpath that is surfaced with concrete flags and the cellar grilles/original light wells have been in-filled. There are stone steps and iron hand rails leading up to the main entrance doors.

At the rear there is a large two storey brick and slate extension with a steel fire escape. To the left hand side there is a ramp enclosed within a low brick wall with stone copings and iron railings atop.

At the rear there is only limited external area that is all hard surfaced with a tarmac surface and there are open boundaries to the rear access (Back St Mary's Place).

The Natural England description for St. Mary's Place;

- Nos 2-20 St. Mary's Place
- Grade II listed,
- List UID : 1067219,
- Date first listed : 29 Jan 1985.

"Dated 1845 on finely-cut moulded stone tablet. Two-storey terrace of two-bay houses in late-Georgian idiom. Hand-made pale red brick, with stone plinth, lintels, 1st-floor sill band, eaves cornice and blocking course. Sash windows with glazing bars (many altered); those of nos. 6 and 8 larger on ground floor. Wooden door cases with fluted pilasters and dentilled cornices; ornamental metal fanlights, mostly curvilinear, to arched heads (except nos. 10, 18 and 20). Slate roof". Source: www.historicengland.org.uk

A planning application (ref; 40360) was approved in December 2003 for 'Listed building consent external refurbishment & restoration including replacement windows & doors, external ramp, internal security shutters, handrails, signs & lighting'.

We understand that these works were undertaken circa 2004 and that significant alterations were also undertaken internally at this time with much of the plaster detailing and decorative joinery replaced at this time and addition of new partitions, doors, architraves, skirting boards, ceiling linings, lighting and fire and security alarms installed.

Following the 2004 refurbishment there is little internally that is of significance to the character of the grade II listed building. A Heritage Statement has been undertaken by Mounteer Limited to fully assess the impact of the proposed development on the significance of this heritage asset.

A building survey has been undertaken and is submitted with this application. There is evidence of some deterioration of the building fabric and a requirement to upgrade the internal areas to allow a residential use. As a minimum works are required to the following elements:

- roof coverings,
- leadwork and stone guttering,
- external windows requiring repair and complete refurbishment,
- external doors requiring complete replacement,
- Internal refurbishment.

The property requires a program of repair and refurbishment to maintain the fabric of the building and to prevent further deterioration of this historic building.

2 - PROPOSED USE & LAYOUT

It is proposed to convert the property in to 9 one bedroom apartments as shown to the existing and proposed floor layouts submitted with this planning application. The apartments would provide the gross internal floor areas (table 1) required by the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS).

There is currently open access between the two properties with a single entrance door (to No. 20) providing the main entrance off St Mary's Place (the other entrance door is not operational (to No. 18). This will continue with the single main entrance providing access to a communal hall and stairs with access to the individual apartments off this.

A side entrance and ramp will be retained to provide alternative means of access for people with disabilities who are unable to use the stepped access to the front entrance.

A new door opening is incorporated to the rear/side elevation giving communal access to the rear space and seating area, cycle rack and bins.

The cellar spaces are to be utilised for storage, meters and cleaners store.

Four apartments would be provided at ground floor, four apartments at first floor level, and a single room to the second floor (9 apartments in total). The apartments will generally have an open plan kitchen/living area, and double bedroom with bathroom or en-suite.

Internally the works to convert/refurbish the property are likely to include:

- limited structural alterations to form the proposed layout.
- construction of new internal walls to form proposed layout including upgrading partition walls to form separating walls, and partitions for en-suite bathrooms,
- addition of thermal linings to external walls to achieve compliance with the building regulations, and to achieve an improved thermal efficiency and EPC rating.
- repair, refurbishment and redecoration of windows.
- part infilling of external doors to form windows (apartments 1 & 6).
- replacement of front doors with composite doors to improve security and thermal performance.

- upgrading of upper floor construction to provide adequate ratings for fire resistance and sound transmission (likely to involve plasterboard linings to ceilings and possible replacement of floor surfaces to incorporate an acoustic separation layer).
- new electrical installations to provide light and power circuits for individual apartments, and fire detection and alarm systems.
- new plumbing installations including provision of en-suite bathrooms to each apartment.
- re-plastering of internal walls and ceilings.
- removal of external fire escape and replacement of external door with window (apartment 6).

The rear external area will be enclosed with a low brick boundary wall and railing similar to that constructed to the adjacent property.

A bin store and cycle rack are provided at the rear for residents and these are shown to the submitted site plan.

3 - AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposal utilises the current building with no extensions proposed.

Cellar area: 51.02m²

Ground floor area: 220.81m²

First floor area: 215.71m²

Second floor area: 52.74m²

4 - SCALE

No extensions are proposed and the external footprint and massing of the building will not change.

5 - LANDSCAPING

There is no landscaping provision to the existing premises and no external space available to provide this. At the rear/side of No.18 a new path will be delineated with resin bound gravel and decorative gravel strips bordered with edging stones to provide a contrast and visual interest.

A seating area will be provided and landscaping through the provision of large containers with evergreen shrubs.

6 - APPEARANCE

The existing external appearance of this building will not change significantly. The front elevation is assessed as having the most significance to the character of the building and the features of this elevation are what are referred to in the listing.

Very few changes are proposed to the front elevation and the proposed works will mainly relate to repair and refurbishment of the existing features.

New composite front entrance doors (only the one to No.18 is to be operational) are proposed to improve security (5 point multi-lock and PAS 24 accredited) and thermal performance.

Limited alterations are proposed to the side and rear elevations with two external door openings changed to windows and the steel external fire escape removed.

7 - ACCESS

There are existing steps up to this building with the front doors located directly adjacent to the adopted pavement. The applicant does not therefore have the ability to construct a ramp to the front entrance to provide a ramped approach. It is also considered that the incorporation of a ramp to the front doors may be detrimental to the historic character/ listing of the building.

Bearing in mind the limitations of the existing building and the importance of maintaining its historic character it is considered appropriate to maintain the stepped approach to the front entrance doors. To the side of No.20 there are two existing ramped access and one of these will be retained to provide an alternative access to the communal hallway.

This will allow access for all users including people with disabilities and this will make this building more accessible (saved UDP policy HT5 – Accessibility for those with special needs).

8 – PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A pre-application enquiry was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (ref:02764E). A site visit was undertaken with a Planning Officer and Conservation Officer and a formal pre-application response was provided. The conversion of the building to residential use was considered to be acceptable in principle.

The relevant planning policies for consideration of the proposed development are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted Bury Unitary Development Plan 1997 (UDP).

Bury UDP policies

TC3 – Bury Town Centre

The subject property has now been vacant for over 2 years. Whilst vacant the building has not been maintained and there is some deterioration of the external windows and doors and other repairs needed to the structure and roof coverings. The external fire escape at the side is in a poor condition and the rear external areas are becoming overgrown and the property has an untidy appearance.

It is evident that the property is vacant and unmaintained and this detracts from the appearance and vibrancy of St Mary's Place.

EC2/2 – Employment Land and Premises Outside the Employment Generating Areas

Marketing has been undertaken to find a new occupant for the building as a commercial use since May 2022 and there has been little interest, the main source of enquiries has been for residential use. The marketing brochure and a marketing report are submitted with the application.

The adjacent property (14-16 St Mary's Place) received full planning consent and listed buildings consent in February 2019 for 'Change of use from massage institute (Class D1) to 2 no. 7-bed houses of multiple occupation (HMO); External alterations to include replacement windows/doors, bicycle/bin storage at rear and boundary wall/gates at rear' (application ref; 63520 & 63521). A marketing report was submitted with this application that confirmed limited interest for residential use, and no interest in an office or educational use. A change of use to residential was subsequently granted.

The subject buildings are vacant and were last used as offices for Bury Integrated Safeguarding Partnership. The internal space is ill suited to the modern demands for serviced office space comprising numerous small rooms rather than the larger open plan arrangements that are generally sought. Access and connectivity between rooms and floors is relatively poor and sanitary and welfare facilities would not meet current standards/user expectations for quality serviced office space.

Where it is demonstrated that a premises is no longer suited to an employment use Policy EC2/2 allows for consideration of alternative development provided that it does not conflict with the character of the surrounding area.

Heritage asset

The LPA are required to consider the desirability for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings including their setting. Applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution to their setting.

In paragraph 197, the NPPF states that LPA's should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

A Heritage Statement is submitted with this application and it is assessed that the development proposals will lead to less than substantial harm. The proposal maintains the building for viable use in the future and introduces residential accommodation to the centre of a town which is considered a positive aspect.

EN1/1 Visual Amenity

It is assessed that the proposal does not have a detrimental effect on the conservation area in terms of public views and visual amenity.

The front elevation will be retained without significant alterations with re-instatement of the decorative iron railings to the entrance steps and refurbishment and redecoration of the timber windows.

Minimal alterations are proposed to the door and window openings to the side and rear elevations and the steel external fire escape will be removed which is considered to be an improvement.

At the rear new low height brick boundary walls with railings atop will be introduced that will define the curtilage of the property, provide defensible space and provide an improvement to the appearance of the streetscape to Back St. Mary's Place.

EN2/1 Character of Conservation Areas

Through investing in the repair and refurbishment of this property with minimal external intervention there is an opportunity to preserve the character of the listed building.

EN2/2 Conservation Area Control

The submitted Heritage Statement assesses that the proposal preserves the character of the row of properties and the works proposed are not detrimental.

EN2/3 Listed Buildings

In the Heritage Statement it is assessed that the building is not particularly altered by the proposals. It is considered that there would not be a detrimental effect on the character and features of the listed building.

EN1/5 Crime Prevention

A Crime Impact Statement is submitted with this application. The statement demonstrates how the application has taken into account existing crime in the area and how the development has been designed to both address issues of crime and minimise its impact on the safety and security of the area.

H2/4 Conversions

We consider the proposed use is in an appropriate and highly sustainable location for one bedroom apartments, it being a town centre location with good provision for transport, employment, shops, health provision, entertainment and fitness, and most local and main facilities.

The adjacent properties (14-16 St Mary's Place) have been converted to a HMO following granting of planning consent in February MBC and the change of use to a HMO was considered to be appropriate and in compliance with the national and local planning policies that are still current.

The frontage of the property and the commercial premises opposite are separated by the public highway (St Mary's Place) and a wide parking forecourt and there is good separation between these uses.

Directly adjacent (to the east) there is the existing HMO where there is only limited interface between the properties at the rear and it is considered that an acceptable arrangement can be achieved and that it would be appropriate to locate the apartment use adjacent to an existing residential use.

To the side (west) and rear (north) there is the East Lancs Railway and a car park for the adjacent commercial properties and there are no other buildings directly adjacent.

Highways and parking

The application relates to a premises located in Bury Town Centre where there is access to good public transport and availability of car parks for public use.

The building is located close to the main Bury Interchange for bus and Metrolink services and has excellent links to public transport to a wide range of destinations.

It is proposed to install a cycle rack at the side of No.18 and within the proposed boundary walls. A cycle rack that would accommodate up to 6 bicycles is proposed (67% provision).

The previous use as office space had no off street parking provision, and the applicant is unable to offer any off street parking for the proposed change of use to apartments. It is considered likely that a significant number of prospective residents seeking town centre accommodation would not be reliant on a private car and would utilise the good provision of public transport that is available.

Where prospective residents do own a car there is limited on street parking to St. Mary's Place and the surrounding streets and adequate car parking in Bury Town Centre, including the following sites within 500 metres and all offering short term parking and annual rental agreements;

- Castle Leisure Centre car park - 219 car park spaces.
- Bolton Street Station car park - 98 car park spaces.
- Irwell Street car park - 36 car park spaces.
- The Castle car park - 36 car park spaces.
- Q-Park Knowsley Place - 406 car park spaces.

When viewing the proposed residential units prospective residents will be aware that dedicated off street parking is not available and where residents require parking they will either discount the property or they have the option to take up a rental agreement to one of the car parks listed above (quarterly and annual parking agreements are offered).

It would be beneficial if the building could be put to a viable use and we consider that there is unlikely to be any greater demand for parking resulting from the proposed change of use to 9 one bed apartments than there would be for the existing lawful use for offices.

The proposal will support the principals of sustainable development and will benefit from a balanced transportation strategy (walk, cycle, bus, Metrolink, car). This will minimise the environmental impact of traffic.

The proposed change of use to one bedroom apartments is considered to comply with HT2/4 Car Parking and New Development and H2/4 Conversions. This assessment is consistent with there being no objection from the Traffic Team to the conversion of the adjacent property to two number 7 bed HMO's.

10 - SUMMARY

On balance we consider that there can be a net benefit from this proposal for an apartment use, including:

- Reuse of a vacant building.
- Significant investment in the building that will improve the appearance of a heritage asset (grade II listed) and ensure the conservation of the building over the mid to long term.
- Provision of residential use in a highly sustainable location with infrastructure already in place.
- Contribution to the Council's housing supply by reusing an existing building representing a highly sustainable form of development and not requiring the release of any further land.
- No greater demand for parking than is likely to be required through the existing lawful use of the premises as offices.
- Implementation of a balanced and sustainable transport strategy (walk, cycle, Metrolink, bus, car).
- The generation of investment in Bury Town Centre and improving the vitality of the centre through the introduction of new residents that are likely to utilise the shops and facilities and improve footfall.
- Improvements to the accessibility of this building for all users.

We consider that the submitted applications for change of use and listed building consent are in accordance with national and local planning policy. We would be grateful to receive the support of the Local Planning Authority in bringing this vacant building back into use for residential purposes.

Statement issued: 28th February 2023

Appendix 1
Photographic survey (21st June 2022)



Image 1 – View to front/side elevation



Image 2 – View of front elevation



Image 3 – View of front entrance doors



Image 4 – View of front entrance door (No 20)



Image 5 – View of window to front elevation (No 20)



Image 6 – View of infilled cellar grate (No 20)



Image 7 – Side elevation (west) and ramp



Image 8 – Side elevation (west) and external fire escape/stairs



Image 9 – Rear elevation to later extension



Image 10 – Rear elevation and later extension



Image 11 – Rear elevation to subject and adjacent premises



Image 12 – External area at rear and side (east) elevation



Image 13 – Side elevation at rear (east)



Image 14 – Brick wall and railing forming boundary division at rear



Image 15 – Fanlight to front entrance door



Image 16 – Internal hallway with cornice and arch detail



Image 17 – Internal view of window, skirting boards and wall and ceiling finishes



Image 18 – View of internal door and architraves within hallway



Image 19 – suspended ceiling installed in ground floor kitchen (No. 20)



Image 20 – Modern internal door & architrave