



PLANNING, **DESIGN AND ACCESS** **AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

SITE: 42 NORTH STREET, HAVANT, PO9 1PT



Planning permission for the change of use of the vacant office building to two flats and erection of rear external staircase and secure cycle storage.

PREPARED BY:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

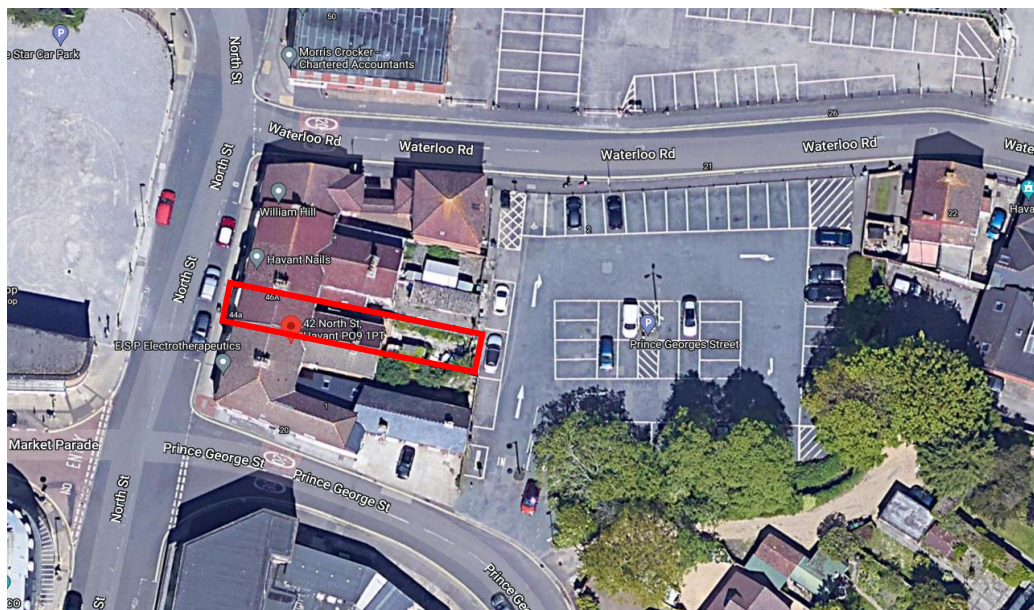
- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access and Heritage Statement is prepared on behalf of Mr Shipp in support of an application for full planning permission for the change of use of the existing vacant office building to two residential flats, with erection of rear external staircase and secure cycle storage.
- 1.2 The Statement incorporates all the required elements of a Design and Access Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Guidance, 2014. The Guidance allows the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require submission of further details if it is considered necessary.
- 1.3 This document has been prepared to assist the Council's officers and members in determining the appropriateness of the development. The applicant is confident that this is the case, and that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions where appropriate and necessary.

2.0 ASSESSMENT

2.1 Site Description

The application site is located within the Town Centre of Havant (see figure 1), within the St Faiths Conservation Area. The application site is made up of a vacant office building, over two floors.

Figure 1 – Site Area



- 2.2 The building fronts North Street and backs on to a public car park at the rear. The immediate area is commensurate of a town centre location with a mix of commercial and residential development. The residential development largely being first floor flats supporting the ground floor retail and commercial premises. Beyond the rear boundary is a public parking area for the town centre.
- 2.3 The site has excellent public service transport links, including bus and rail as well as good vehicular links. In addition, the site is within walking distance of Havant Park. The site does not have on-site parking, and none is proposed due to the high accessibility and sustainability of the site's location.

Figure 2 – Aerial Map



3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 None relevant to this proposal

4.0 **PLANNING POLICY**

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, in determination of planning applications decisions are made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise

4.2 **National Planning Policy Framework 2019**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced on 27 March 2012 and was updated in 2021. It continues to establish a presumption in favour of sustainable.

- 4.3 The NPPF makes clear that regard must be had to the document as a whole in determining what the Government's view of sustainable development means in practice. It promotes the effective use of land through the re-use of previously developed land.

- 4.4 There are three overarching dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

- 4.5 *"a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy" (Para.8 NPPF, 2019).

4.6 Paragraph 9 goes on to say:

“These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.”

4.7 Paragraph 38 makes clear that *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”*

4.8 Para. 60 states: *“To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”* Para. 62 goes on to state *“Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).”*

4.9 The site is sustainably located which allows access to public transport and access to local facilities by foot or cycle, thus reducing the reliance for car ownership. This is a key aim of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that there *“is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”* (NPPF, 2021, paragraph 11). The proposal would therefore accord with the objectives of the NPPF, 2021 in that it provides essential small-scale accommodation in an accessible location in an innovative way without

compromising residential amenity of the character and appearance of the Conservation area in which it sits.

4.10 **Havant Borough Core Strategy 2011**

The following policies of this document are considered relevant to the development proposed:

CS9 Housing: criteria 1 and 4 and supporting paragraphs 6.23 and 6.24;

CS16 High Quality Design: criteria 1 (a), (b), (c) and (e); criteria 2 (a) and criteria 6. Regard has also been given to the supporting text with particular reference to paragraphs, 7.39, 7.42, 7.47, 7.48, 7.49 and 7.50;

CS17 Concentration and Distribution of Development within the Urban Areas: criteria 1 and 2;

DM8 Conversion, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features: criteria 1, 2 and 3;

DM13 Car and Cycle Parking on Residential Development.

4.11 **Havant Borough Residential Parking and Cycle Provision SPD, 2010**

The development would seek to provide two, one-bedroom dwellings. Having regard to the parking standards within the SPD the development does not propose any on-site parking due to its Town Centre location. It is pertinent to note that the existing offices do not benefit from on-site parking either. Two secure cycle spaces will however be provided per dwelling. It is considered that this would be in line with adopted parking and cycle standards for this Town Centre location.

4.12 **Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations), 2014**

AL1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development and supporting text.

AL2 Urban Area Boundaries and Undeveloped Gaps between Settlements, particularly paragraph 2.06. This policy seeks to encourage development within the defined settlement boundary.

DM24 Recreational Disturbance to Special Protected Areas (SPA's) from Residential Development, criteria (a). It is understood that the site is within the SPA the applicant is therefore prepared to pay the SDMP mitigation payment.

4.13 The development would be delivered with full regard to the above development plan policy framework. The proposal would provide two small starter homes

within a highly sustainable part of the Borough and included within the settlement boundary.

4.14 The development as proposed has had specific regard to the policy requirements, both locally and nationally. The development has proper regard to the character and appearance of the Conservation area, the residential amenities of adjoining properties and those of future occupants.

4.15 The development would make efficient use of a sustainable site within the urban edge, close to public transport links and Havant Town centre, providing smaller affordable market housing commensurate with that already found in the area. It is therefore contended that there is no policy objection to the development as proposed.

5.0 PROPOSAL

5.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing vacant offices to two number one-bedroom flats. The proposal would also include the erection of a rear external staircase and secure cycle and bin storage area.

5.2 The amenity space provided for the new dwellings would be by way of private rear garden at ground floor level. This is easily supplemented however, by Havant Park, a short walk to the west of the site. The gardens are considered to be more than sufficient for the passive recreational requirements for the one-bedroom dwellings and would accord with the requirements specified in the residential design guide.

5.3 Development Objectives

- Provide two high quality one-bedroom dwellings that are compatible with and sympathetic of the existing built form and character of the area.
- To provide much needed smaller market accommodation in a sustainable location to meet social and economic objectives.

- To provide a more efficient use of the site without causing unacceptable harm to the residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings, future occupants or the character and appearance of the Conservation area.

6.0 EVALUATION

6.1 Character and Appearance:

The site is located within the built area of Havant Town Centre, an established, retail, commercial and residential area characterised by a variety of building styles and uses, ranging from two to four stories in height.

- 6.2 The proposed change of use would retain the existing external appearance of the building, with the exception of a new first floor stair access to the rear. It is considered that this approach ensures that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved.

- 6.3 The amenity space is located to the rear, in line with neighbouring properties which backs on to a public car park. The proposed stair access would look out over the rear garden and public car park ensuring that there is no impact on neighbour amenity.

- 6.4 In respect of the above information it is considered that every regard has been given to the existing character and appearance of the area. The development would result in a development that would make a positive contribution to the area, whilst retaining the important qualities of the site and built form found within the locality.

6.5 Residential Amenity:

The change of use has no impact on neighbour amenity and would utilise the existing openings within the building. The only external change is the provision of an external staircase to the rear. However, this would overlook the rear gardens and public car park. It is therefore considered that the development does not give rise to any harm to neighbour amenity.

- 6.6 The proposed dwellings would have their outlook and amenity space to the front and rear overlooking the main road and public car park area. As such it is not considered that there will be any direct or unacceptable overlooking or loss

of privacy, with the development offering passive surveillance which will add to local security. In addition, the spacing and use of space ensures that future occupants retain appropriate living space without unacceptable overshadowing or overbearing.

- 6.7 The built relationship, separation distances, positioning of windows and use of space all combine to suitably protect existing neighbour amenity and the amenities of future occupants. It is therefore considered that the change of use and associated development would not result in unacceptable harm by reason of overshadowing, loss of light, overbearing effect, loss of privacy or overlooking.

6.8 **Highway Safety:**

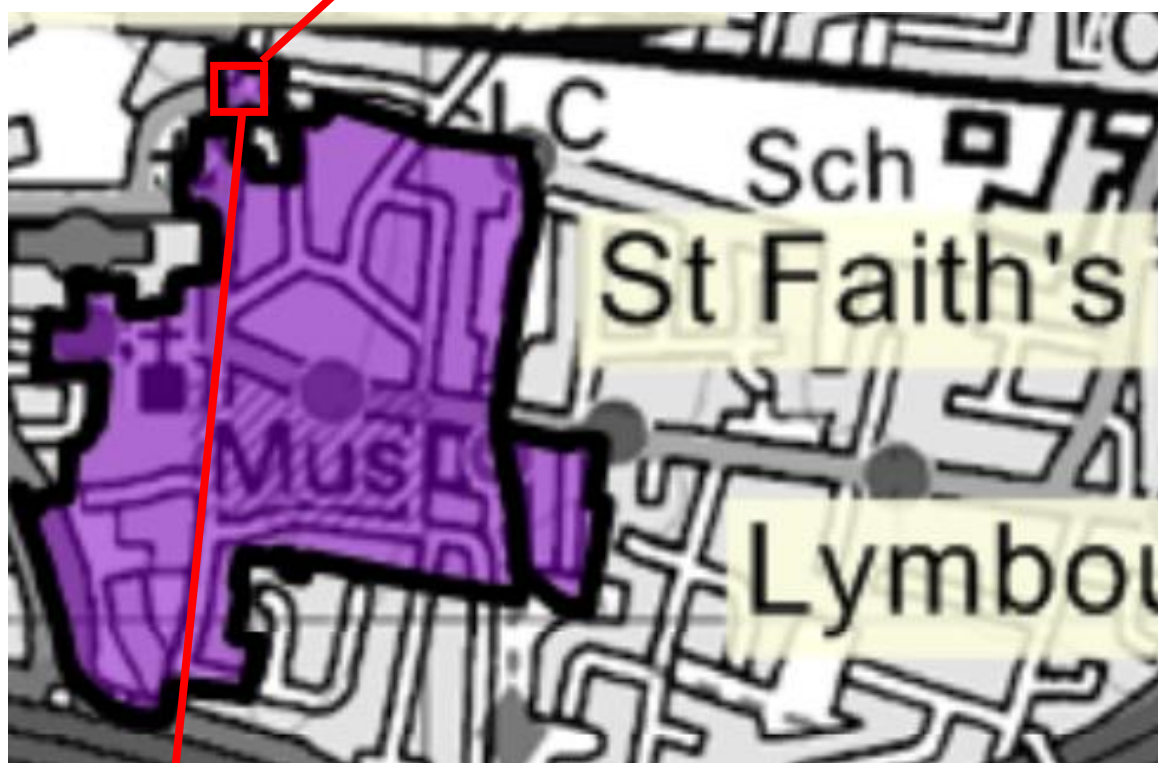
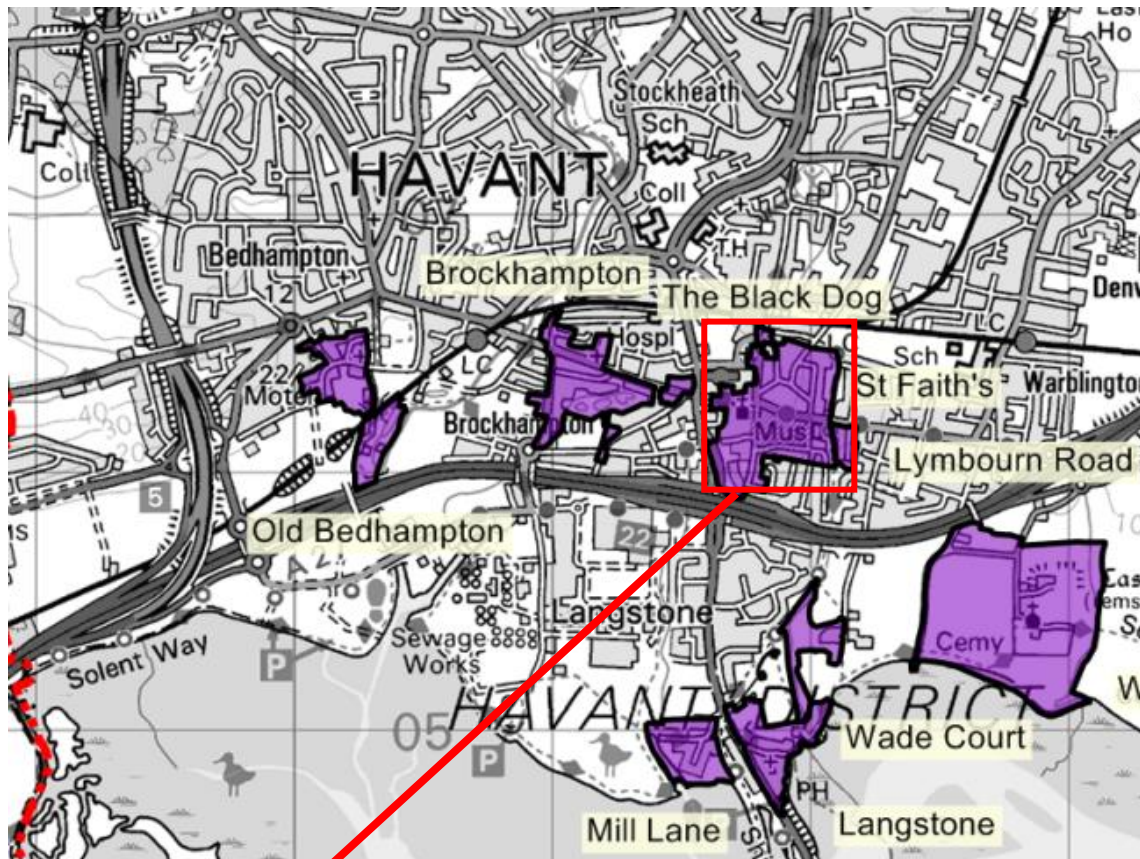
The site is located within Havant Town Centre a well accessed and sustainable location. There is currently no on-site parking provision for the offices, and it is not intended to offer any for the two one-bedroom flats, due to the site's accessibility.

- 6.9 Having regard to the ability to utilise train and bus connections within a few minutes' walk of the site, as well as open space, recreational facilities (including Havant leisure centre), higher education facilities and commercial and retail facilities it is contended that the dwellings will appeal to occupants that will not be in need for car ownership. The provision of secure cycle storage would therefore suffice in this instance.

- 6.10 It is therefore considered that the development would be acceptable in highway terms for such a location.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

7.0 St Faith's Conservation Area



Application Site

- 7.1 The application site sits just within the northern section of St Faith's Conservation Area.
- 7.2 **Conservation Appraisal**
"North Street (2) • The United Reformed church (a replacement for an earlier church in 1891 by A E Stallard) to the corner of North Street and Elm Lane is one of the largest buildings in the conservation area and prominent in the street scene (figure 6). It marks a change in the scale along North Street and the character area continues to be defined by the survival of nineteenth century Havant up to the station forecourt.
- 7.3 *The historic scale of the street is two storey with North Street Parade (despite its successful recladding) and the corner buildings on Market parade being out of scale with the rest of the street (figure 7)". Figure 7 shows the area in which the application site sits. "The Star Inn at a modest 2½ storeys terminates the street successfully at the station forecourt. There is a variation to the roof line with small groups of pitched roofs, some parapets and gables onto the street. This variation reflects the same characteristic seen in the central core. The building line is consistent to back of pavement with only a single prominent gap adjacent to The Perseverance public house.*
- 7.4 *All the pre-twentieth century buildings in this character area form a cohesive group which are consistent in their scale and building line. The random ragstone of the church combined with the deep sweeping roof of natural Welsh slate makes a significant impression in the street scene and represents the start of a varied group of buildings in terms of materials.*
- 7.5 *Views north along the street into the character area and south from the station are dominated and partially closed (to the north) by the United Reformed church. Its sheer massing and large roof plane with a fleche to the ridge have had a significant effect on the street scene with the Meridian centre (incorrectly) taking its scale from this building rather than the predominant scale of this street. Oriel bay windows form a prominent localised feature to this part of the conservation area and appear on a number of buildings including both public houses (The Star and Perseverance) and above shopfronts in groups".*



Figure 6: The United Reformed Church looking north along North Street



Figure 7: View looking south along North Street from the station forecourt

- 7.6 Section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in the Conservation Area of any powers (under the Planning Acts), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

- 7.7 Paragraph 206 requires that *“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”*

- 7.8 It is considered that the development as proposed has duly considered the Conservation Area designation and will see an effective redevelopment of the site in a manner that will preserve the character and appearance of the St Faiths Conservation Area street scene and setting.

8.0 ASSESSMENT

8.1 Principle of Development

The application site lies within the urban edge where the basic principle of development is considered to be acceptable, with any formal planning approval being based upon the exact nature, design and impact of that proposed being considered appropriate and in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies and Supplementary Planning Documents.

- 8.2 The Local Plan requires any development within a designated conservation area to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting, to not detract from the character of the area or street, be appropriate in terms of its mass, scale, design and materials, and to be sympathetic to existing buildings and the particular character of the area.

- 8.3 Given that the application involves only the change of use of the existing building and that the external staircase is located to the rear of the site the

development would clearly preserve the existing character and appearance of the building and the Conservation Area in which it sits.

- 8.4 The development would therefore accord with the requirements and objectives of local plan policy as well as the statutory purposes of preserving and/or enhancing development within designated Conservation Areas.

DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

9.0 LAYOUT

- 9.1 The layout of the proposed flats utilises the existing ground and first floor of the office building. The principle habitable spaces are concentrated to the front and rear, ensuring that they maintain good natural light levels for future occupants.
- 9.2 The bedroom, bathroom and dining areas are located within the central part of the building, but each room has access to windows, ensuring adequate access to light and ventilation.
- 9.3 Overall the development offers two spacious one-bedroom flats, with access to private amenity space. In addition, the site is located centrally within Havant Town Centre.

10.0 SCALE:

- 10.1 The height, massing and proportions of the existing building are fully retained, with no change to the external appearance of the site, with the exception of the rear staircase and garden areas for the two flats. However, the external staircase replicates similar accesses within the immediate and surrounding area and are consistent with the Town Centre.
- 10.2 It is considered that the change of use offers an innovative form of development that maximises site efficiency whilst retaining the existing scale and design thus preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

11.0 ACCESS:

- 11.1 The design and layout of the dwellings allow for free and easy access at ground floor level throughout the site and to external facilities such as refuse points and cycle storage. There would also be level thresholds to further

improve access in and out of the dwellings. The internal arrangements for disabled access are covered by Part M of the Building Regulations.

12.0 SUSTAINABILITY

- 12.1 National and local planning policies encourage new development to be sustainable. This includes matters of location, sustainable methods of construction and ecology. As a matter of principle, the proposed development would be sustainable, because it would utilise an existing building within a Town Centre location.
- 12.2 The change of use would incorporate improved insulation and energy and water efficiency measures. The proposal is therefore considered to more than satisfy the sustainability requirements for this form of development.

13.0 CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Having regard to relevant development plan policy it is contended that the development as proposed has had every regard to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The change of use allows for the efficient use of the site whilst paying due regard to the existing character of the area. Further it makes provision towards much needed housing which is in strong demand in the area.
- 13.2 It is considered that the design and layout ensure that the development has no impact on neighbour amenity with sufficient space afforded for future occupants, both internally and externally.
- 13.3 It is contended that the proposed development would represent an efficient use of the site, in a sustainable location and in a sustainable form, whilst paying due regard to existing development densities, prevailing character, residential amenity and highway safety. It would also preserve the appearance of the St Faiths Conservation Area. The Council is therefore respectfully requested to approve this planning application.