

Planning Supporting Statement

**Proposed change of use of upper floors
to create 4 self-contained flats; 41-43
Wellgate, Clitheroe. BB7 1LU**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This supporting statement forms part of a pre-application enquiry to Ribble Valley Council by Peter Hitchen Architects for the change of use of the upper floors above existing commercial premises for the creation of 4 self-contained flats [C3]. Peter Hitchen Architects have provided a full and detailed set of plans and a separate design statement that sets out the scale, form and external appearance of the premises.

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site comprises an end of terrace commercial property fronting Wellgate, Clitheroe. The building is situated within the defined settlement limits of Clitheroe, being located within the “main centre boundary” as identified in the Core Strategy; it is also located within the Conservation Area. Immediately to the southeast of the lies a designated heritage asset, the grade 2 Dog and Partridge public house. The immediate area is characterized by a range of uses, both commercial and residential that typify Clitheroe Town Centre.

3 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 Under application 2023/1011, permission was sought for the change of use of the upper floors of 41–43 Wellgate through the creation of 5 new residential units by means of conversion of and extension to, the premises. The application was refused with two reasons given in the decision notice: Reason 1 specifically related to the adverse impact of the 2-storey extension of the premises at the rear when taken in concert with the increase in height of some extract vent ducting, would have of the character of the conservation area and the significant harm to the adjacent heritage assets. Reason 2 specifically related to the lack of any assessment made with regard to the potential noise nuisance impacts likely

upon future residential occupiers of the flats given the proximity of the adjacent Dog and Partridge pub and the extraction vent equipment.

4 The Proposal

- 4.1 In essence, the applicant, who is the freehold owner of the site, wishes to bring into use the first and second floors of the existing commercial premises by way of converting these floors into residential use; the manner in which it is intended to undertake the development is described in the full details provided by Peter Hitchen Architects by way of detailed drawings and other supporting details. The premises have always been in some form of commercial use, at ground floor level, for a considerable period of time. The first floor has been used in association with that use and in support thereof. The details in the pre-application submission have been formulated following the refusal of application 2023/1011; this pre-application enquiry is accompanied by two independent reports addressing the reasons for refusal put forward in the decision notice.

5 The Development Plan

- 5.1 In preparing this statement, full regard has been made to the relevant policies in the Development Plan including those in the Adopted Core Strategy. Current Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework has also been considered. It is respectfully considered that the following Development Plan Policies are the most relevant against which to assess the merits of pre-application enquiry proposal; indeed, these are the specific policies considered by the case officer when dealing with planning application 2023/1011 and the subsequent refusal:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development

Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets

Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development

Key Statement EC2 – Development of Retail, Shops and Community Facilities

Key Statement DM12 – Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations

Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations

Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility

Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation

Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets

Policy DME5 – Renewable Energy

Policy DMB1 – Supporting business Growth and the Local Economy

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

Chapter 2 achieving sustainable development

Chapter 6 Building a strong, competitive economy

Chapter 8 promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9 promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 making effective use of land

Chapter 12 achieving well designed places

6. Planning Policy Assessment

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.1 The Framework fully supports all efforts to promote sustainable development wherever that may be. Chapter 2 is explicit. This pre-application proposal is in response to a refusal of planning application 2023/101. Such development will meet the requirements of NPPF in this regard in that it will clearly meet an

economic, social and environmental objective. The site is within the clearly defined town centre of Clitheroe as set out in the development plan.

- 6.2 At chapter 6, the Framework encourages development that will support the economic, social and environmental objectives. Clearly, there is strong support at both national and local level for the introduction of residential uses above ground floor commercial premises within defined town centres. The proposal, in principle will continue to support these objectives.
- 6.3 At Chapter 8/9, the Framework encourages and promotes maintaining both healthy communities and sustainable transport; the proposal does clearly support these objectives; Ribble Valley has plenty of attractions and a good many of them are accessible by public transport systems. The proposal meets the requirements of the Framework.
- 6.4 At chapter 11 the Framework sets down the tests for making the most effective use of land both urban and rural. The site lies within the defined Clitheroe town centre currently operates on a commercial basis at ground floor level.
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- 6.5 At Chapter 15, the Framework supports proposals that seek to safeguard, conserve and enhance the natural environment. There is no harm caused to the environment as a consequence of the existing use.
- 6.6 It is respectfully submitted that the application proposal is in accord with the requirements of The Framework

The Development Plan Core Strategy

KEY STATEMENT DS1 /DS2/DMG2: Development Strategy

- 6.7 In dealing with the principle of the conversion of the first and second floors of the premises to residential development as set out in the refused application 2023/1011, the case officer had the following to say in his delegated report:

“.....In respect of the above policy considerations/criterion, the application site is located wholly within the defined settlement limits of Clitheroe [Principal Settlement]. As such, the principle of the development of the site for residential purposes would fully align with the inherent criterion of Policy DMG2[1], particularly insofar that it would represent development that it is closely related to in the main built-up area of the settlement to which it relates.

With the proposed development further aligning with the aims and objectives of Key Statement DS1 insofar that it would result in residential development “focused towards” and being within a designated Principle Settlement.

As such and taking account of other matters, it is not considered that the creation of new residential planning units in this location, notwithstanding other development management considerations, would result in any significant measurable adverse conflict with Key Statement DS1 nor Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy in relation to the locational and spatial aspirations for new housing growth within the plan area.”

- 6.8 It is respectfully submitted therefore, that in the context of considering the appropriateness of the principle of what is now being proposed in the pre-application enquiry, that is of a residential development at first and second floor level, there are no policy objections arising as clearly stated and confirmed by the case officer in his delegated officer report quoted above and more specifically where he states “....notwithstanding other development

management considerations....” That are relevant to Key Statement DS1 and Policy DMG2

KEY STATEMENT EN5/Policy DME4/DMG1:

- 6.9 A reason for refusal put forward in the decision notice [2023/1011] specifically related to the impact that the proposal would have upon both the character of the Conservation Area within which the site is situated and also upon adjacent listed and un-listed heritage assets. The officer delegated report refers to the fact that little if any evidence was presented with the submission that addressed this matter.
- 6.10 In this regard, the applicant has engaged a Heritage consultant and a stand-alone report is included within this pre-application submission that addresses the concerns expressed by the case officer when dealing with application 2023/1011.

Policy DMG1–General Considerations

- 6.11 Similarly, the refused application raised an issue with regard to the potential noise nuisance that may be caused to prospective and future inhabitants of the residential units especially from the continued use of the ground floor for commercial purposes and also from the adjoining Dog and Partridge public house. Reference was made to the fact that insufficient supporting evidence, if any, had been submitted addressing this issue. The applicant has engaged specialist consultants and their report, based on the details contained in this pre-application submission are enclosed.

Planning Conditions

- 6.12 A condition restricting the use to that applied for will suffice in ensuring compliance with the policy requirements of the development plan alongside any other such conditions that address matters raised in the specific consultants' reports.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 It is submitted that all of the details contained in this pre-application submission are clear and unequivocal in their intent. The proposal is considered to meet and address those reasons for refusal set down in application 2023/1011. The proposal would now be in accordance with the aims and objectives of planning policy at both national and local level and can be approved without prejudice thereto.

Trevor Hobday MRTPI
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