

Design and Access Statement

Conversion and refurbishment of first and second floor accommodation to create three number, one bedroom self-contained apartments with refurbishment of the ground floor to create an A3 commercial unit.

Summary

This design and access statement supports a formal planning application for the conversion and refurbishment of the upper floors to create three number one bedroom self-contained apartments with part refurbishment of the ground floor to create an A3 commercial unit.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the following drawings:

- 302 – AL(90)00 – Site Location Plan.
- 302 – AL(99)01 – Existing GF.FF Plans.
- 302 – AL(99)02 – Existing SF Plan.
- 302 – AL(99)03 – Existing Elevations.
- 302 – AL(99)04 – Proposed GF.FF Plans.
- 302 – AL(99)05 – Proposed SF Plan.
- 302 – AL(99)06 – Proposed Elevations.

Brief and Vision

At present, approximately two thirds of the ground floor is utilised as a barber shop. An existing commercial unit to the rear of the ground floor and fronting Masonic Street is currently vacant, boarded up and requires full refurbishment.



Photograph along Masonic Street to the rear of 32 High Street.

The upper floors are currently vacant and again in need of refurbishment. The proposed investment in the building to create three self-contained one bedroom apartments and refurbishment of the ground floor commercial unit, will upgrade the building fabric and benefit the street scene. The roof covering will be replaced as part of the works, the elevations will be refurbished and stripped of historical installations such as the air conditioning unit, redundant mechanical and electrical apparatus, the rear fires escape and the like. The proposed works will vastly improve the overall aesthetic whilst utilising the existing building without extension or undue alteration.



Side Elevation

Proposed side elevation to Masonic Street.

Site and Context Analysis

The subject site is located at the corner of High Street and Masonic Street in Merthyr Tydfil town centre.



Aerial photograph of site location.

The property is typical within the street scene, with retail/commercial use to the ground floor and residential use to the upper floors. High Street, at this location, is a relatively busy part of the town centre. 32 High Street benefits from a corner plot arrangement with the additional window opportunities and frontage the location provides.

Masonic Street is less travelled than High Street. However, the rear of 32 High Street is in close proximity to the junction to High Street and visible as a part of the wider retail/commercial area. The surrounding uses also 'turn the corner' along Masonic Street. In addition, Masonic Street provides an access route for pedestrians from the railway line and parking areas to the north and east of the site.

At present, the rear and side elevations to 32 High Street are in a relatively poor condition. The proposed scheme will improve the overall aesthetic which from the north is quite prominent in the street scene. The use of the upper floors for residential use will also provide additional passive monitoring of the area whilst also allowing continued investment in the property to maintain the fabric.



Street view from the north along Masonic Street.

Design Development

Prior to appointment of the design team, the applicant conducted local research to gauge the requirements for residential units in the area along with a proposed use for the rear ground floor commercial unit. Regarding the proposed residential use, apartments in this location become apparent as the most appropriate use. Several schemes were developed with a combination of two bedroom, one bedroom and three bedroom apartments. However, the applicant would like to ensure that the apartments are generous and capable of providing a high level of accommodation in terms of living space, sleeping accommodation and associated storage and so forth. Three number one bedroom apartments provide efficient use of the available floor areas whilst also providing a modern standard of accommodation for the end users/occupants.

Regarding the proposed A3 to utilise the existing unit to the rear of the ground floor, the applicant researched the local need and the demand for various proposed uses. The location, layout and scale of the existing unit limits the proposed uses, however offers an ideal A3 use as a modest take away unit.

The Proposal

As outlined above, the proposed scheme will include the following:

1. Refurbishment and conversion works to the upper floors to create three number self-contained one bedroom apartments.
2. Refurbishment and conversion works to the ground floor rear unit to provide an A3 take away use.
3. Full replacement of the roof covering and replacement fascia, soffit and rain water goods.
4. Full refurbishment of the elevations to remove redundant fixtures and fittings, re-opening of historically extinguished side window, reinstatement of rear window to remove external fire escape, redecoration and upgrading of the elevations generally, replacement windows and external door, a new shop front to the proposed A3 unit in line with the Merthyr Tydfil shopfront SPG.
5. Installation of security shutters to the existing and proposed windows and doors to the ground floor other than to the apartments access door.
6. Internal refurbishment and alterations to the rear ground floor.

Access and layout

The access and layout to the existing barber shop will remain as existing. The existing side access door to Masonic Street will be retained to access the upper floors, the doorway will be replaced and upgraded as part of the works.

The proposed A3 unit will utilise the existing shop front opening which will be fully refurbished. The location of the front door to this unit will remain in the existing position to make use of the dropped kerb at this location for ease of inclusive access.

The rear yard area will be divided into two spaces – one to serve the A3 unit refuse requirements (to be operated through a private contractor), the second space will be given over to allow the storage of bins and bikes for the apartments. Access will be retained via the rear secure gated access with the gates replaced with more secure and aesthetically pleasing gates.

Conclusion

Adaptive re-use of the existing building within an established context close to the highway and wider transport network is inherently sustainable. The existing building fabric is in urgent need of refurbishment which in turn will benefit the street scene and wider context in this area. The intensification of use of the site will also hopefully benefit the immediate area/Masonic Street and certainly improve the street scene along Masonic Street.