

**PLANNING STATEMENT  
INCORPORATING  
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

**IN SUPPORT OF A FULL PLANNING AND  
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION FOR  
ALTERATION AND CONVERSION OF A VACANT OFFICE BUILDING  
TO 10 RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS  
(REVISION OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SCHEME)**

**AT  
LEAT HOUSE, 71 WELHAM ROAD, NORTON**

**PREPARED ON BEHALF OF  
WILLOW DEVELOPMENTS LTD**

**NOVEMBER 2017**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report has been produced in support of a full planning and listed building consent application for the partial demolition, alteration and conversion of Leat House into 10 residential apartments. The application is a revision to a previously approved scheme granted in April 2017 under applications 16/01848/FUL and 16/01849/LBC. This revised scheme results in less demolition and less external alterations to window and door openings.
- 1.2 Leat House is a Grade II listed building, which has stood vacant for approximately 5 years. The last use of the building was B1 office use, however prior to that there have been multiple other uses of the building including as a convalescent home, private dwelling units, bed & breakfast and a hotel.
- 1.3 The proposals include a small element of demolition. This is restricted to the south eastern corner of the building, which comprises later single storey additions and an external fire escape.
- 1.4 A small ground floor extension would be incorporated into the scheme. This new build element would be located within the footprint of existing buildings that are to be demolished. Other external alterations include the installation of 1 new window opening, the alteration of 2 window openings to doors and the alteration of 2 fire escape doors into windows. A small number of existing windows will be replaced with fire escape windows however these will be within existing openings and will be of identical appearance to those which they replace. The majority of changes are on the eastern elevation following the removal of the fire escape stairs and renovation of the later extensions. This elevation is the least visually prominent and its cement render finish suggests it has been subject to previous alterations. The main area to be altered already has consent to be demolished and as such is not considered to be of significant historic interest.
- 1.5 Internally a number of stud walls are proposed to sub-divide the larger rooms into smaller spaces. Some existing internal doorways are to be blocked up and new ones installed. Whilst the main staircase is to be retained, for safety and accessibility reasons consent is sought to replace the small staircase up to the second floor. Other features of historic and architectural interest such as fireplaces,

coving/cornicing, old doors and old floor boards are to be retained or reused within the conversion wherever possible.

- 1.6 The site is located on the corner of Welham Road and Beechwood Road. It comprises a substantially altered and extended, three storey building in generous grounds. At the time of its construction the dwelling would have been surrounded by countryside. However, the area around it, including parts of its original grounds have over time been built up into what is now a predominantly residential area on the outskirts of Norton and Malton.

Other Planning History

- 1.7 Ref. 17/00981/COND – Discharge of conditions 3 & 4 of 16/01848/FUL – Approved 29.11.17
- 1.8 Ref.17/00982/COND – Discharge of condition 4 of 16/01849/LBC – Approved 25.10.17
- 1.9 Ref. 17/00866/FUL – Extension to form boiler room – Approved 14.09.17
- 1.10 Ref. 17/00879/LBC – Extension to form boiler room – 14-09-17
- 1.11 Ref. 95/00125/LBC (3/96/110K/LB) - Internal alterations affecting entrance lobby, reception, staff room female/store, kitchen and conservatory together with provision of a disabled wc - Approved 18.09.95
- 1.12 Ref. 94/00141/LBC (3/96/110J/LB) - Siting of 11 cast iron bollards to car park together with area of tegula concrete sett paving - Approved 09.03.94
- 1.13 Ref. 93/00163/LBC (3/96/110H/LB) - Removal of two small windows and installation of one large window at Leat House - Approved 01.12.93
- 1.14 Ref. 92/00142/LBC (3/96/110G/LB) - Brick up door opening to form window at Leat House - Approved 15.10.92
- 1.15 Ref. 91/00156/LBC (3/96/110F/LB) - Enlargement of external window and various internal alterations at Norton Manor - Approved 22.7.91

- 1.16 Ref. 91/00155/OLD (3/96/110E/FA) Change of use of hotel to class B1 offices - Approved 03.05.91
- 1.17 Ref. 89/00147/OLD (3/96/110D/FA) - Erection of an annex to form staff accommodation at Leat House - Approved 06.02.90
- 1.18 Ref. 87/00120/OLD (3/96/110C/FA) - Extensions and internal alterations to form bar room, lounge and ladies & gents toilets - Approved 05.01.88
- 1.19 Ref. 80/00153/OLD (3/96/110B/PA) - Change of use of premises from part bed and breakfast accommodation into a private hotel at Leat House - Approved 2.12.80
- 1.20 Ref. 78/00115/OLD (3/96/110A/PA) - Change of use of part of a dwelling into bed and breakfast accommodation at Leat House - Approved 03.07.78
- 1.21 Ref. 75/00136/OLD (3/96/110/PA) - Alterations to and change of use from convalescent home into self-contained units comprising of lounge, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom and wc at Leat House - Approved 03.02.76

## 2.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

### Use

- 2.1 The current lawful use of the building is B1 office use. The offices were last occupied by Yorkshire Housing Association who it is believed vacated the premises in 2012.
- 2.2 The site is located within a primarily residential area surrounded by dwellings on all sides. It is understood that Leat House, formerly known as Sutton Cottage, was originally constructed as a country house, when it was in the countryside.
- 2.3 It is proposed to return the building to its original residential use albeit rather than being a country house with stables and a gardener's cottage, the offices and car park would be converted into smaller one and two bedroom apartments with gardens and parking in keeping with the now built up surroundings of the building.

### Amount

- 2.4 The proposal would result in the loss of approximately 613sqm of office space and the gain of ten, one and two bedroomed, residential apartments.
- 2.5 A small amount of floor area would be lost due to the proposed demolition of the unsafe conservatory. Part of this would be replaced by a simple lean to extension within the footprint of the building to be removed. The amount of development will be similar to that which has historically existed on site and would not result in overdevelopment. In fact the residential use is likely to be less intensive than previous office and hotel uses.

### Scale

- 2.6 The proposal relates to the conversion and alteration of an existing building. No new buildings are proposed other than a small lean to extension which is within the footprint of and indeed smaller than the footprint of the area to be demolished. As such the scale will remain similar to that which currently and has historically existed.
- 2.7 In terms of the scale of individual dwelling units to be created, a mix of one and two bedroomed units are proposed. This will make efficient use of this large and sustainably located site.

### Layout

- 2.8 The proposal utilises the existing vehicular access, driveway and parking area, albeit the parking area is proposed to be reduced in area to enable the reinstatement of some garden space to the rear of the building.
- 2.9 Internally the building layout remains principally the same in terms of the main entrance, staircase and load bearing walls. New stud walls will be used where necessary to sub-divide some internal spaces.

### Appearance

- 2.10 The external appearance of the listed building would remain relatively unchanged. The most significant differences will be:
- Removal of the external fire escape – this detracts from the historic character of the building and would result in an enhancement.
  - Removal of the conservatory – the conservatory dates back to approximately the 1960's and may once have been an attractive addition to the building, however, its timber frame is clearly now rotten and the glass roof is in serious danger of collapsing as the timber glazing bars continue to deteriorate. This structure is beyond repair and its removal would enhance the appearance of the building.
  - Alteration of ground floor extensions on the south eastern corner of the building – these later additions comprise a mixture of materials and window styles that do not complement the historic character and appearance of the principal building.
  - Addition of new lean to extension within the footprint of the conservatory to be removed. The extension would be constructed in stone to match the main building but would also incorporate large areas of glazing and a modern zinc roof. The extension would be subservient and sympathetic to the much more significant main building.
- 2.11 The eastern side elevation will require re-rendering and repainting. Given that this elevation is already cement rendered there are unlikely to be any benefits to using a lime based render however material samples will be explored and submitted shortly for agreement by the LPA.
- 2.12 Any blocking up of openings and making good of walls following demolition shall be done utilising matching brick or stone work. Any new windows shall be timber sliding sashes.

- 2.13 The repair and reuse of the building and its associated ongoing maintenance and use will ensure its long term retention and preservation.

#### Landscaping

- 2.14 The site benefits from existing mature planting, which is to be retained and would be unaffected by the proposals. Existing boundary walls and hedges are also to be retained. A small number of trees have recently been removed due to being in a dangerous condition.
- 2.15 Whilst no additional landscaping is considered essential to the scheme, it is anticipated that due to the reduced car parking requirements for the proposed use that some hardstanding could be replaced with softer landscaping for garden use.

#### Planning Out Crime

- 2.16 Vacant sites such as this can easily become vulnerable to vandalism, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. Bringing the building back into permanent 24/7 use is the best possible crime deterrent.
- 2.17 The position of the site on a prominent corner plot, provides a high level of natural surveillance. The proposed layout provides a secure environment with the main entrance, shared areas, bin storage and car parking spaces all being in light and open spaces with natural surveillance from neighbours and passers-by. This openness acts as a natural deterrent to criminals.
- 2.18 Windows and doors will be fitted with high quality locks and consideration will be given to installing alarms and motion activated lighting etc. However, such measures will need to be carefully balanced against the need to preserve the historic character of the listed building.

#### Climate Change / Sustainability

- 2.19 The site is located in the market town of Norton, a sustainable settlement with a good range of services, facilities and public transport available within walking and cycling distance.
- 2.20 The proposal re-uses, and provides the best means of preserving and enhancing, this vacant listed building.



2.21 The apartments would be designed (as far as possible without compromising the historic fabric of the building) to comply with current building regulations. Energy efficiency will be improved and materials will be sourced locally wherever possible.

2.22 The site is not located within a flood risk area.

#### Access

2.23 The site has an existing vehicular access off Beechwood Road, which is a lightly trafficked residential cul-de-sac and an adopted public highway. Sufficient space will be available within the site for the parking and turning of future residents and visitors vehicles.

2.24 Traffic generated by the development will not be significant and will be of a domestic nature. It is considered that the residential use of the site will generate less traffic than previous office and leisure uses of the site.

2.25 Norton and Malton and all of their services and facilities are within walking and cycling distance and public transport is available. As such future occupiers of the apartments would not need to be reliant upon private cars.

2.26 In relation to access to buildings the apartments would be designed to be accessible to all possible future occupants in accordance with current building regulations unless conservation requirements override this.

### **3.0 PLANNING POLICY**

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan for this area currently comprises the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy (adopted 5 September 2013) and the 'saved' development limits shown on the proposals map of the Ryedale Local Plan (adopted 2002). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration which must be taken into account in decisions on planning applications.

3.2 The Local Plan Strategy Policies considered relevant to the proposal are:

Policy SP1 - General Location of Development and Settlement Hierarchy

Policy SP2 - Delivery and Distribution of New Housing

Policy SP3 - Affordable Housing

Policy SP4 - Type and Mix of New Housing

Policy SP12 - Heritage

Policy SP16 - Design

Policy SP19 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy SP20 - Generic Development Management Issues

Policy SP22 - Planning Obligations, Developer Contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy

3.3 Norton is defined by Policy SP1 of the Local Plan, together with adjoining Malton, as the Principal Town within Ryedale District and a primary focus for growth. The application site is located within the defined development limits of Norton.

3.4 Policy SP2 of the Local Plan seeks to direct 50% of all new housing in Ryedale District to Malton and Norton. It confirms that the sources of new housing that will contribute to the supply of new homes will include the conversion of existing buildings and sub-division of existing dwellings within development limits.

3.5 Policy SP3 (affordable housing) must now be considered in light of recent Written Ministerial Statements, Case Law and amended National Guidance, which state that affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought on developments of 10 or less dwellings.

- 3.6 Policy SP4 encourages increased housing choice, type and mix including through the re-use of empty properties. The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 4.47 identifies a particular need for smaller properties and flats, stating that *“Shortfalls in the existing stock are predominantly related to smaller properties and specific property types. For example there are noticeable shortfalls in flats and bungalows across much of the District.”*
- 3.7 Policy SP12 encourages the sensitive re-use and adaptation of historic buildings subject to their conservation and where appropriate, their enhancement.
- 3.8 Policies 16, 19 & 20 encourage high quality design, set out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and cover general planning matters in line with national planning policy and guidance.
- 3.9 Policy SP22, like Policy SP3, is overridden by recent changes in national guidance in relation to sites of 10 or less dwellings. Apartments are exempt from CIL within this area.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.10 Section 6 “Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes” requires housing applications to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of development.
- 3.11 Section 7 “Requiring Good Design” encourages developments that seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.
- 3.12 Section 12 “Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment” at paragraph 128 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 3.13 Paragraph 132 points out that heritage assets are irreplaceable and that substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building would require exceptional justification.

- 3.14 Paragraph 133 advises local planning authorities to refuse permission for development that will lead to substantial harm or total loss of a designated heritage asset unless it can be demonstrated the development would achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the loss.
- 3.15 Paragraph 137 however states that proposals that preserve or enhance the setting of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.

#### **4.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

##### Principle of Development

- 4.1 The site is located within the development limits of Norton, a principal town and a suitable and sustainable location for new housing development. Furthermore the proposal relates to the conversion of an existing building on previously developed land.
- 4.2 The proposal would provide 10, one and two bedroomed apartments. The local plan identifies a particular shortfall of smaller properties and flats within the district. As such the proposal would contribute towards addressing an identified housing need.
- 4.3 The proposal therefore accords with policies SP1, SP2 and SP4 of the Local Plan Strategy.

##### Impact on Heritage Assets

- 4.4 See separate report.

##### Impact on Character & Appearance of the Area

- 4.5 The site is currently unused, the buildings are deteriorating and the grounds are becoming overgrown and untidy. This has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.6 The proposal is to create a high quality attractive housing development that would respect the scale, character, appearance and layout of historic building and the surrounding area.
- 4.7 The renovation and reuse of the principal building together with the removal of later additions, such as the fire escape stairs and poor quality ground floor extensions, would positively preserve and enhance the appearance of the site and its historic character.
- 4.8 The proposals therefore accord with policies SP12 and SP16 of the Local Plan.

#### Impact on Residential Amenity

- 4.9 The renovation and reuse of the building would have a positive impact on the visual and residential amenity of existing neighbouring properties. Living adjacent to a vacant and deteriorating old building is not an attractive option to most.
- 4.10 Leat House has been used for numerous commercial purposes (care home, hotel, B&B, offices etc). Its return to residential use would be more in keeping with its residential surroundings and less likely to result in any disturbances.
- 4.11 The scale of the building and layout of the site would remain similar to that which currently exists, with a slight reduction to the building footprint. As such there would be no impact on neighbours in terms of overlooking and overshadowing. Car parking and bin storage areas are not immediately adjacent to any neighbouring residents.
- 4.12 Future residents of the Leat House apartments would have a high standard of amenity and would not suffer from overlooking or overshadowing. A generous amount of shared garden space would be available to them.

#### Highway Safety

- 4.13 The site has an existing vehicular access off Beechwood Road, which is an adopted residential cul-de-sac. Sufficient space will be available within the site for the parking and turning of future residents and visitors vehicles.
- 4.14 Traffic generated by the development will not be significant and will be of a domestic nature.
- 4.15 The town centre and all of its facilities are within walking and cycling distance. Secure cycle storage can be provided within the site. A good standard of public transport is also available locally and therefore future residents would not be car dependant.

#### Other Material Planning Considerations

- 4.16 This application is a re-submission of a previously approved scheme. The majority of the proposals already have planning and listed building consent and this should be given significant weight in the determination of these amendments. It is considered that the proposed amendments will result in a more viable and saleable development, which is vital to the delivery/completion of the project.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The site is located within the development limits of a sustainable town, it would bring back into use a vacant listed building and would contribute towards addressing an identified shortfall of smaller residential units/apartments.
- 5.2 The proposals, the majority of which are already approved under applications 16/01848/FUL and 16/01849/LBC, would preserve and enhance the architectural and historic interest of the listed building. The removal of the unsafe conservatory and unsympathetic fire escape stairs will not result in any harm or loss to the heritage asset as they do not form part of its significance. The replacement staircase would result in less than substantial harm to the heritage asset and would be outweighed by the benefit of making the proposal to put the building back into a suitable sustainable long term use viable.
- 5.3 The remaining changes to the building are of a minor nature. They would not result in the loss of or harm to any historic fabric and would aid the conservation and enhancement of the building by bringing it back into a long term, viable use. Any minor harm resulting from the proposed changes would be outweighed by the benefits.
- 5.4 The proposal would comply with the development plan and national planning policy in terms of the provision and location of new housing and the protection and enhancement of heritage assets. There would be no adverse impact in terms of residential amenity and highway safety.
- 5.5 In conclusion it is considered that the proposals subject to these planning and listed building consent applications offer a highly sustainable development with significant benefits and as such should be approved without delay.