

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
CHANGE OF USE FROM C1; BOUTIQUE STYLE HOTEL TO C3 & C4
RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS (ASSOCIATED SUBDIVISION); 107
ST. ALDATES, OXFORD



Site Context:

107 St. Aldates is building in the City Centre and one of the city's designated Conservation Areas that has a small frontage but its plan goes back a long way with parts above and behind other retail units. Parts of the building date back to the 15th Century. It is situated in-between the St. Aldates Tavern and Trail finders. Two doors down going out of town the impressive Post Office Building and two doors up into town, St. Aldates Chambers the Planning Offices. There is rear access to 107 St. Aldates off New Inn Yard. The underpass between the pub and Planning Offices as can be seen above; New Inn Yard being owned by Merton college. 001 Taxis operate off New Inn Yard which can be found at the back of number 107.

The building itself is very interesting. The front facade dates back to the early 19th Century. The shop front dates back to the early 20th Century. The rear part adjacent to number 108, 001 Taxis is believed to be the oldest dating back to the 15th Century. There is also a first floor steel conservatory adjacent to New Inn Yard that probably dates back to the 1930s. A detailed report has been written about its history as part of the Oxfordshire Buildings Record O.B.R. 224. A copy of this has been submitted as accompanying information to this application.

As of April 2017, the building has been designated as Grade II listed. There are certain elements that are excluded from the listing, namely the mid section. It appears the listing relates mainly to some of the interior original features such as fireplaces and the frontage. Details of the listing can be found on the 'Historic England' website

Central Oxford is known as a vibrant tourist destination with visitors all year round, though this has not been the case throughout the pandemic. St. Aldates is a short walk away (100m) from all of the major shops, restaurants, cafe's pubs. Number 107 St.

Aldates is across the road from the Town Hall. The train station and central bus station are a short walk away. There is a taxi rank a few metres away at Carfax which is operated by 001 taxis next door to the property. The location is therefore highly accessible and sustainable.

Planning History:

Planning permission was granted on 30th of January 2013 for conversion of the storage units above the retail unit at 107 St. Aldates into 3 no. apartments (Ref: 12/01905/FUL & 12/01906/FUL. Two 2 bedroom apartments and a studio apartment to the rear section over the garages to the St. Aldates Tavern. The ground floor is currently occupied by Ladbrokes. Change of use from storage units above the retail unit to hotel was granted in 2015 (Ref: 15/01750/FUL). Since then conditions that relate to the latter application have been approved.

The Proposal:

It is now proposed to convert the Boutique style Hotel into 3 no. apartments similar to those proposed back in 2013. The reason for this is due to the fact that 2020 has been a disastrous year in terms of occupancy and business in general. The restoration of the building resulted in a high amount of borrowing and waiting for the economy to bounce back is no longer an option for my client whom is under immense pressure off the lenders. Since 2015 there have been further developments elsewhere in the city including the imminent arrival of the `Easy Hotel' in Summertown that are likely to affect business to smaller enterprises even when things bounce back. As such my client has taken this difficult decision and wishes to try for apartments again. All the historic features will remain intact and the changes proposed are minor, modern bathrooms being replaced with kitchens etc.

We have thought carefully about the proposals and how they can be best suited to the building, allowing for the least amount of changes to the fabric and retaining the historic features. It is proposed to convert the front part of the property into a 2 bedroom duplex style apartment occupying the first and second floors. A bedroom would convert to a kitchen diner and the reception area/ office would convert to a sitting room.

Secondly it is proposed to convert the mid section of the property including the conservatory into a 4 person HMO apartment. We feel this would be best suited as it will allow for retaining 4 of the bedrooms with their ensuites. The bedrooms have plenty of daylight but no real outlook. The communal space is quite spectacular so this would make up for it. We feel this part of the property would suit this use better than if a

family unit

Thirdly, it is proposed to convert the rear section that overlooks New Inn Yard into a one bedroom apartment. This would be of generous size, occupying three of the current rooms.

The building had been converted to a high standard with good sound proofing between the rooms and a sprinkler system. The proposed changes will result in good use of space and will make things easier for my client, whom has been struggling to run the Hotel in recent times. There is a shortage of housing, especially in central Oxford and this will help address the national housing shortage. The principle of three apartments to the storage space above the retail unit is already one that had been thought acceptable back in 2013.

There are no proposed changes to the retail unit, occupied currently by Ladbrokes.

[Access \(vehicle parking, cycle parking, bins storage & the building\):](#)

As discussed on previous applications, there is no parking on site. The apartments would need to be consented on a car free basis. Being centrally located, this would be expected and it would be highly impractical if there was parking in this location. All the amenities are practically on the doorstep, there are buses that run along St. Aldates and the property is a short walk away from the railway station. 001 Taxis operate from 108 St. Aldates and it would be possible for people to be dropped off at the property either by cars/ taxis stopping on St. Aldates or driving down New Inn Yard, turning around and exiting. Therefore it is deemed that lack of parking should not be an issue.

There is no external space associated with the building and therefore as discussed previously it will be hard to provide bicycle storage facilities on site. In actual fact it is likely that residents whom choose to live at the property will work in the city centre and walk to where they need to. There are a number of bicycle share schemes. There are also bicycle stands that have been provided by the council that are situated within 100 metres/ easy reach of 107 St. Aldates.

In terms of bins storage again this is difficult as with many of the city centre situations. There are no wheelie bins in the city centre. These would block the pavements and streets on days of collection, so the council operate the traditional solution of collecting black bags once a week. It is proposed that rubbish will be kept within ventilated cupboards either within the ground floor rear entrance area, as they do currently.

Rubbish will be put out on the day of collection as it currently does. In addition to this residents will be encouraged to use local recycling banks.

Access to the accommodation. Two apartments will have their access via. The rear entrance of New Inn Yard. One apartment will have its access via. the front door, which is situated adjacent to the Ladbrokes front entrance.

Sustainability:

In terms of heat losses and wherever possible, insulation would be added and thickened up in order to perform better thermally. The proposed changes do however relate entirely to the internal structures.

The contractor will be encouraged to responsibly source, local materials and use energy efficient lighting. He will also be advised to show a commitment to employ the best practice, site management principles. The health and well being of the future guests will be satisfactory by the provision of adequate levels of daylight, sunlight, lower heating bills due to additional insulation wherever possible and further visual improvements external facades.

Basic building elements of construction will be from responsibly sourced materials as will finishing elements and a Green Guide for Housing Specification rating of 'A' will be strived for in all building elements.

Tree Survey, Arboricultural Statement:

No trees are to be affected by the proposals or are within falling distance of the property.

Rights of Way and Countryside Access:

There are no rights of way that are affected by the proposals and no change to, or obstruction of walking, cycling and riding resources or countryside access.

Flood Risk Assessment:

According to Environment Agency's flood risk maps, the property does not lie within areas of flooding from rivers or sea without defences or areas of extreme flooding.

Crime and community safety:

By bringing back a building that has been vacant for some time to a good use, this is expected to have a positive effect on community safety.

Biodiversity:

We believe that this is not applicable to this project. The building is in a sense already a building site and in a very built up area.

Heritage Statement:

A heritage statement had been prepared at the time of the last application at the time of the restoration. Now it is only proposed to alter a few of the recent partition walls and remove a few modern bathrooms/ replace with kitchens. No historic fabric will be affected and as such it is thought a Heritage Statement will not be a requirement.

Foul Water:

The property is currently served by the local authority drains. This will remain as existing.

Surface Water:

All gutters are existing. There will be no change to the drainage routes.

Day/ Sunlight assessment:

As the changes are to the internal spaces only this is not relevant.

Landscaping details:

There are no external spaces that are associated with the property and as such landscaping details are not relevant to the proposals.

Conclusion:

To conclude, the changes to this property, its use class along with creation of a few attractive apartments would not have a detrimental effect on any of the neighbouring properties or on the area as a whole. The future of this building will be protected for the foreseeable future, furthermore some well needed housing will be created that will serve the local community.

As we understand there is a shortage of suitable accommodation in the city centre to supply the demand for housing, the proposed changes will make good use of the building that offers good quality accommodation yet has been vacant for much of 2020. The proposals have been well thought through and designed in a way such that they should be sympathetic to the building and locality not resulting in a loss of character.

DIGBY ARCHITECTURAL, JANUARY 2020