

2106 No.43 High Street, Hawick

Partial Change of Use/ Residential Conversion

For Khanh Hoang Limited



Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Aditus Architectural Services Limited

May 2021

Introduction

Our client, Khanh Hoang Limited purchased the ground floor and basement section of no. 43 High Street, Hawick last year in order to transfer their business there from a neighbouring, leased property.

Our client's beauty business will not require all of the floor space available in the unit so the intention is to separate the rear part and basement and convert these into a residential property, initially to serve as manager's accommodation for the business.

The property is a challenge to convert, however some initial discussions were held with building standards to better understand the issues and the resultant design represents some practical compromise.

The building is within the conservation area and this has also been taken into account when designing the conversion.

Proposals

The proposal is to split the shop unit along the line of some existing walls and create a two-bedroomed dwelling in the rear part of the building. The existing basement will be tanked and insulated and become a living room. The existing doorway out will be re-used and new window openings created to provide adequate daylight. External ground levels will be altered to give the door a level access out. A new internal staircase will link this living room to the main floor and this main floor will then accommodate the bathroom, two bedrooms and a kitchen/dining space. In order to supply natural daylight and ventilation to the bedrooms, two large rooflights will be added into the existing flat roof. As these cannot be used for escape, the corridor serving them will be made an escape corridor – some internal remodelling of levels by the introduction of a short flight of stairs and landing will make the existing fire escape available to this corridor and bring people out quickly to open air. A timber-framed greenhouse structure is suspended over this escape route, at some height, but is not within the ownership of our client. The new fire escape door will be partially glazed to bring natural light into the escape corridor. The dividing door to the shop can be a secondary escape route as it will pass through a compartment wall (the existing structure needs to be examined for suitability of its compartmentation and some upgrading may be required).

As the accommodation will be related to the shop, the principal entrance is intended to be from a separating door into the shop unit – this means level access into the dwelling can be achieved from street level via the shop unit and both bathroom, sleeping and kitchen provision is on the entrance level.

The only other access point that could have been considered was via the garden gate at the rear; this opens onto gardens and unmade ground so was deemed unsuitable for either vehicle or pedestrian access as the land beyond the gate is outwith our client's ownership.

Existing refuse and recycling bins are taken out to the High Street via shared access through the area noted as 'Flat access' and it is intended that this arrangement would be used for the dwelling also. The rear escape route is via an existing and initially quite steep ramp by the side of the proposed dwelling. It is proposed to level this off once clear of the line of the

building with a large flat area supported by new retaining walls. This area can be used for bin storage and a new set of shallow steps will lead down to the garden area, making a safer access and escape route. In the event of someone escaping a fire, the flat area can also serve as a disabled refuge.

Access

As outlined above, the principal access is intended as being via the shop unit. The shop unit's main entrance door opens onto the footpath of the adopted highway and has level access. This level access continues through the shop and to the location of the proposed separating door ensuring that wheelchair and ambulant disabled users will have no difficulty accessing the dwelling.

Bathroom, sleeping and kitchen/ dining accommodation is all located on this entrance level and one of the bedrooms could be re-purposed as a living room in the event of a change of circumstances and mobility for one of the dwelling occupants.

Additionally, a new internal staircase has been added to the living room with sufficient space for a chairlift and there is proposed to be level access to the outside from that living room.

Generally, provision has been made in the design for compliance with the general provisions of clauses 3.12, 4.1, 4.2 & 4.2 insofar as is practical in the circumstances.

Conservation Area/ Effect on Heritage Asset

No works are proposed to the principal elevation facing High Street as part of this change of use application.

Works to the rear and side elevations and associated garden spaces we generally consider to be an improvement on the existing condition. An accompanying set of photographs showing the existing condition of these elevations can be found in the appendix to this statement.

The existing rear elevation will become effectively the principal elevation of the dwelling. Currently this elevation has one small timber window in poor condition on its upper floor and a blank timber door on its basement level. There is evidence that there have been window/ door openings in this wall in the past and all have been blocked up using a mixture of brick and stone types, none of which are sympathetic to the original stonework. The original stone itself is not of a high quality, dressed-stone nature as with the street elevation and is best described as coursed, random rubble stone.

The intention of the design is to create a proper house-front elevation by introducing a greater element of symmetry in the size and positioning of the new windows and thus improve the quality of the façade.

The side elevation that has the fire exit door is largely unseen and the only change proposed is to lower the position of the door so that it exits directly onto the passageway floor outside rather than over steps, improving considerably the safety of the escape.

Overall, no detrimental effect is considered likely on either the building or the conservation area as a result of the proposed works.



Conclusion

The proposed works to change the use of back areas of an existing shop unit into a useable dwelling do, in our opinion, balance well the practical aspects of achieving this safely and of developing sensitively a building within the conservation area.

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Appendix A – Photographs



Photograph 1 – View of northeast elevation



Photograph 2 – View of northeast elevation and existing ramp



Photograph 3 – view of northeast elevation and door to basement (blocked openings visible)



Photograph 4 – view of northeast elevation and door to basement (blocked openings visible)



Photograph 5 – view of northeast elevation (blocked opening visible)



Photograph 6 – existing ramp & fire escape



Photograph 7 – existing fire escape steps to be altered.



Photograph 8 – View from within shop unit towards rear area proposed for change of use – central doorway to be separating/ access door



Photograph 9 – existing street door/ level access