

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

Project Address		Proposed Change of Use from Retail to Residential Valum House, Westgate, Haltwhistle, NE49 9AF
Ref		21VHH
Application		Full Planning Change of Use
Applicant		Mr William Hind & Mrs Brenda Forster
Planning Portal Ref		PP-1037910
Date		11 th November 2021
Revision		V.1.0



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This Heritage, Design & Access Statement is in support of a Full Planning Application for Change of Use and associated works and should be read in conjunction with the following drawings:

- 21VHH (LO) 01 Location Plan
- 21VHH (EW) 01&02 Existing & Proposed Site Plan
- 21VHH (EX) 01,21-23 Existing Plans & Elevations
- 21VHH (GA) 01,21-23 Proposed Plans & Elevations

Location

Insight Architectural Design Ltd have been appointed by the applicant to develop proposals for part change of use of Vallum House on Westgate in Haltwhistle, Northumberland. The full postal address and location for the property is as follows:

Vallum House, Westgate, Haltwhistle NE49 9AF
Property Grid Reference | NY706640
Easting: 370624, Northing: 564031

The application site sits in the centre of the town of Haltwhistle. Haltwhistle is defined as a main town and a focus for development in this area of Northumberland. The application site sits within Haltwhistle Conservation area.

Heritage

Haltwhistle | General Character & Plan Form

The enclosed linear main street gives way to a network of back-land courts and pedestrian routes before opening out to more exposed routes such as Fair Hill. These are much added to by the drama of various earth works and other structures associated with the railway, which include the railway embankment and Alston Arches Viaduct.

The most significant influence upon Haltwhistle in terms of general character and plan form, is the market place in conjunction with the early church complex, have early C13 origins and although the early church complex is not clearly discernable, these elements have done much to influence latter day Haltwhistle. This is particularly true of the fairly intimate market place, the linear main street, and the manner in which historic burgage plots and associated development run contrary to this, resulting in close grained back-land courts and narrow pedestrian routes.

Landscape Setting

The fairly dense nature of development in Haltwhistle unfolds gradually into the rural landscape that surrounds the settlement. Close by the town and in the valley bed this is largely comprised of farmland before rising to a combination of farmland and woodland. In turn, this mix is surmounted by the open moor-land of the North Pennines. The undulating landscape setting of Haltwhistle is an important element of the conservation area in terms of its setting and views into and out of this.

Westgate

Much of this area is close grained, and the character of townscape derived from the juxtaposition of plain, domestic-scale buildings with larger, more ornate structures. Westgate is straight for much of its course and of a constant width, but the varied height and form of the buildings creates an informality and vitality that would otherwise be lacking. Bends in the road at each end of the historic core close views, allowing the street to unfold only gradually.

An important open space is found at the west end where this opens up the north side of the street to the hospital, although a basic urban formality is retained by the treatment of this space as public gardens. Such formality is lost however, at the road junction beyond. Here buildings are lower and irregularly sited and the wider roads with their amorphous layout do not provide a fitting or definitive approach to the railway station, with its assemblage of attractive Grade II listed buildings and structures. The line of Westgate, however, is continued to the west as Park Road (outside the conservation area).

The Market Place is a fairly intimate area to the south of Westgate which, although marked by larger buildings at its entrance, is not immediately recognisable as a commercial space. Its irregular shape in conjunction with the small scale of surrounding buildings, their irregular arrangement and the openings leading to the churchyard and Black Bull Lane, lend this space a wholly informal atmosphere.

Throughout the area, side streets and lanes are an important feature, often opening out into compact, tightknit, back-land residential areas that occasionally frame distant views. Another, more open, back-land area is Eden's Lawn with its interesting selection of polite 19th century villas, which command largely uninterrupted views over countryside to the south.

Key Buildings

Many of the listed buildings in Haltwhistle are located in this area, emphasising its historic significance. Key townscape buildings tend to be larger, later buildings, such as the Church Hall, HSBC Bank at the western edge of the Market Square, and the Italianate building (also intended as a bank) at its eastern corner.

The Centre of Britain and Manor House hotels also have a robust street presence. This is in part due to their painted facades which contrast vividly with the natural stone of the remainder of the street.

The former Town Hall is important in marking the entry to the town centre from Castle Hill, and provides a subtle change in scale and form from the smaller-scale, more organically developed area to the east.

The parish church has very little presence in the townscape, and is hidden from the main street by the buildings of the Market Place. However, the gables of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches punctuate the west end of Westgate, and with the Library, provide important contrasts of scale, built form and detail with the linear blocks that form the remainder of the street

The group of four shop fronts at the north-west end of Westgate is a surviving example of late C19 retail design. The Church Hall is very large, and tends to loom over the street (and the whole town, in views from the north), lending this building particular townscape

Green Elements

The western end of Westgate opens up into the spacious, formal parkland surrounding the War Memorial and Hospital grounds, which contains many mature trees. This provides an attractive setting for the hospital building and a soft boundary to the formal avenue of trees continues conservation area on this edge. The symmetry of planting and layout recognises its function as setting for the war memorial and, as the western entrance to the town centre, provides a memorable contrast with the informality of Townfoot at the east end.

Built Form

Buildings are 2 or 3 storey, with pitched roofs, generally with eaves on the road frontage and gable parapets. Although terraced, the ridge and eaves lines vary considerably, and in places, their spacing is dictated by early plot boundaries.

Chimneys at gable ends underline the rhythm of development and provide an important vertical emphasis. Windows are vertical sash-and-case on upper floors, often with larger shop windows below. Archways or narrow entrances through to rear areas are common.

Generally, the architecture of the west end of Westgate is of a large scale and has more decorative detail than encountered elsewhere within the area. A group of buildings to each side of the United Reformed Church has dormers facing the street, echoing the change in character of the Hospital grounds opposite.

Eden's Lawn is an important exception to the above. Consisting of detached or semi-detached houses, these are set in relatively spacious gardens which highlight their individual designs and celebrate their important position on the skyline overlooking the river and roads that traverse the valley.

Materials, Colours, Textures

As seen elsewhere in the town, the predominant material is local yellow-grey sandstone, laid either as ashlar or coursed rubble. However, several buildings are rendered and painted in a variety of traditional pigment colours. To the west of the Market Place brick is used, sometimes decoratively.

Roofs are generally Welsh slate, with some local flagstone remaining on older buildings. Windows and doors are timber, and windows painted white, with other joinery being painted dark red, blue or green. Rainwater goods are black painted cast iron.

The surface treatment of many lanes surrounding the churchyard has been preserved or sympathetically restored, and this contributes greatly to their character, particularly where the curves of the roadway are emphasised. The predominantly blue/grey palette of the surfacing alters at the hospital however, where reddish concrete blocks and pavements have been used.

Details

Buildings are generally of a plain vernacular style, giving special emphasis to individual details, or to the few more decorated buildings scattered along the street. Corner treatments are often individual and memorable, sometimes truncated or embellished, with details such as decorative gutter brackets.

Many shops retain decorative facades, largely in various states of repair, while some good modern shop fronts have also been created, for example in the Square.

Source: Haltwhistle – Conservation Area Character Appraisal - Tyndale Council Adopted March 2009

Planning Policy & Context

This proposal is for the part ground floor change of use from retail into 1no. residential unit and minor elevational modifications. The main issues for consideration include:

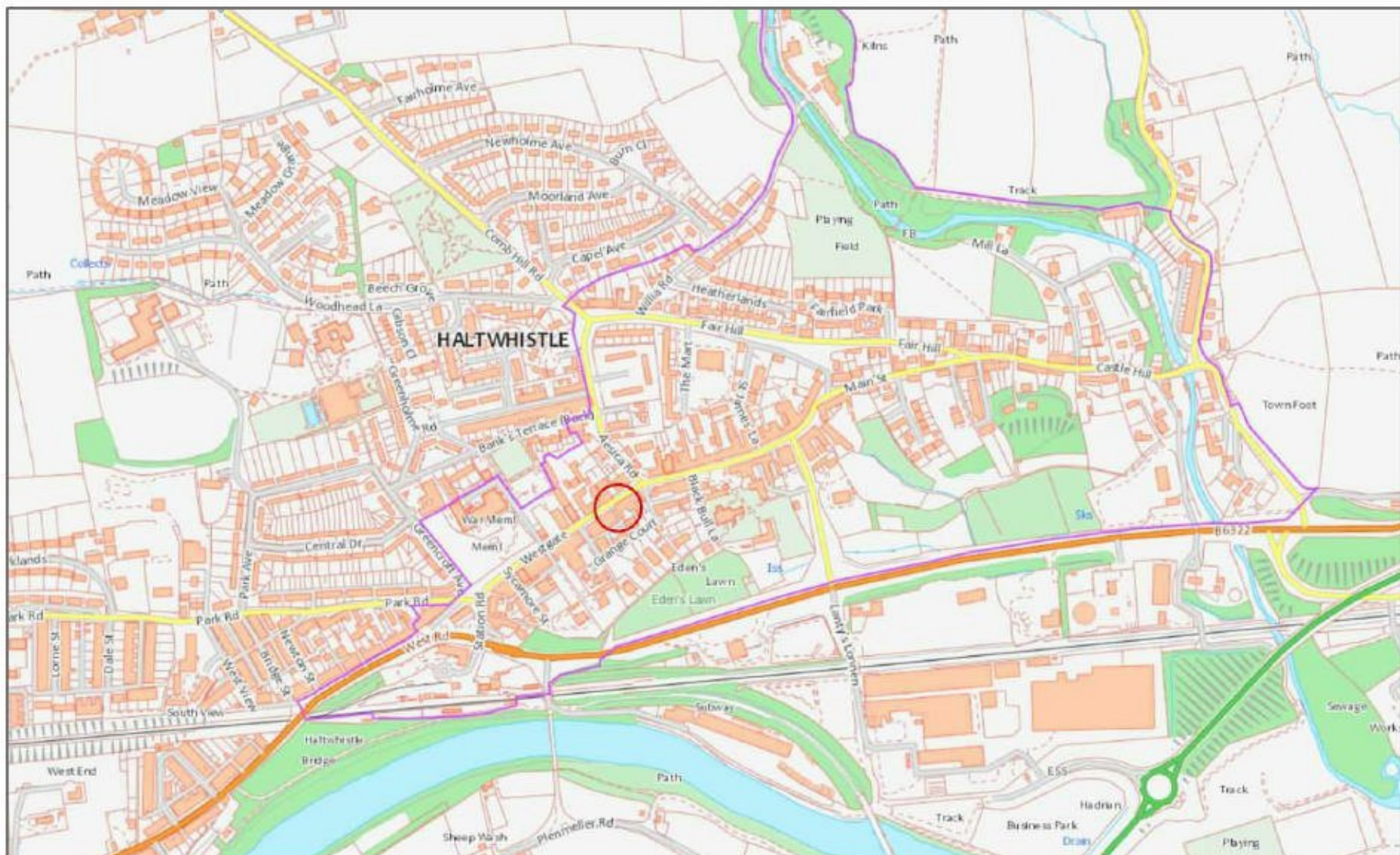
- Principle of development
- Impact on the Haltwhistle Conservation Area
- Impact On Amenity

Principle of Development

Core Strategy Policy GD1 sets out principles for locating new development and states that Haltwhistle is a main focus for development. Core Strategy Policies permits the conversion of buildings to residential and tourism use in towns and villages. The proposal for new development in this location is therefore considered acceptable.

Impact on the Conservation Area

The premises will fully retain the existing appearance and aesthetic on Westgate in addition to 50sq m of retail space at ground floor. Proposed materials are in keeping with existing and will echo surrounding buildings. As such it is considered that there will be no visual impact on the existing town centre and Haltwhistle Conservation Area.



Application site (circled) in relation to the Haltwhistle Conservation Area (purple line)

In addition, the proposal would secure long-term occupation and future maintenance of the building, would contribute to the repopulating of the existing town centre and consequently increase security of adjacent premises and the town centre generally. It is therefore considered that this proposal would not impact upon the viability or vitality of Haltwhistle town centre or conservation area and is therefore considered acceptable in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF.

Impact On Amenity

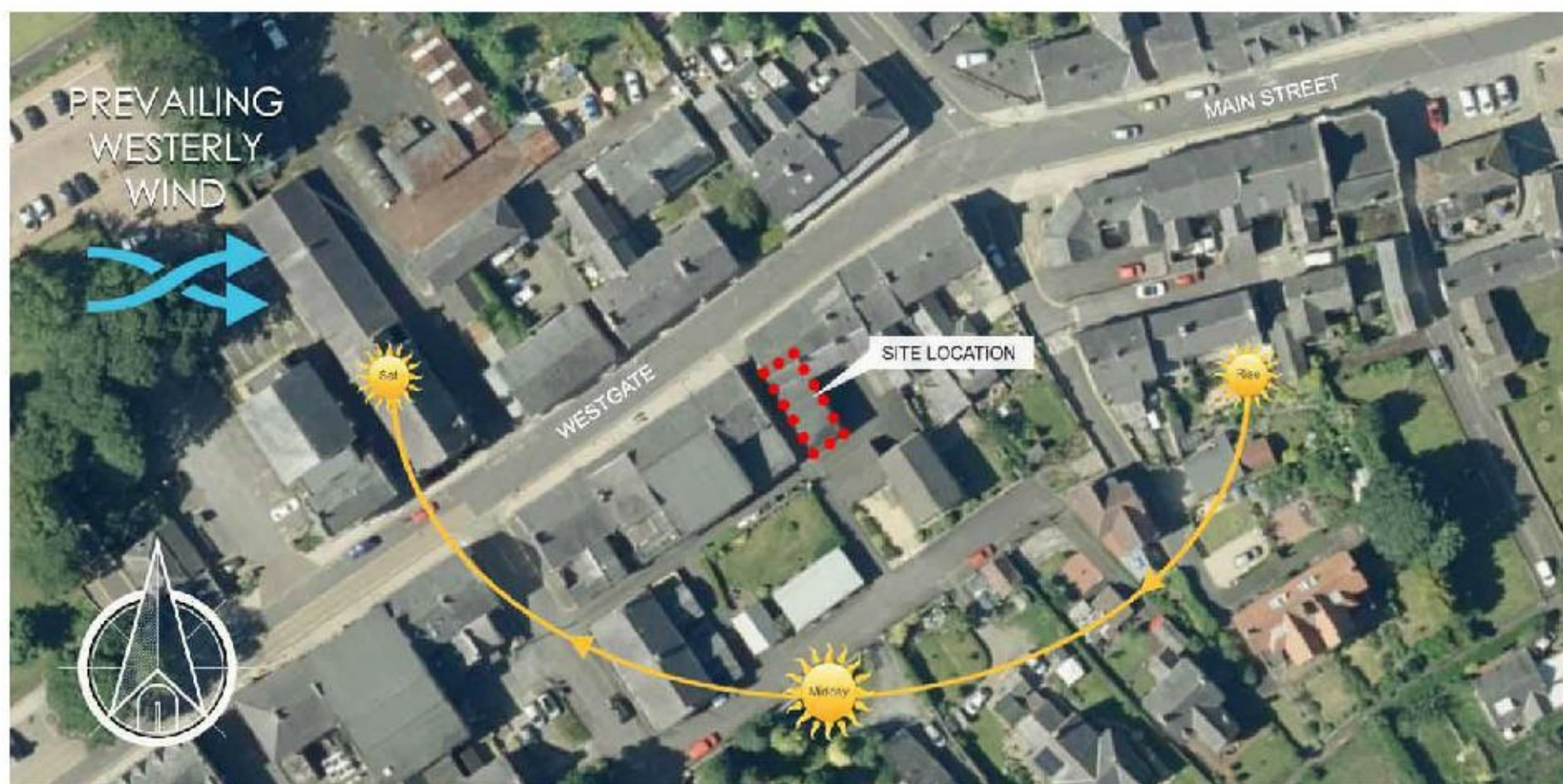
The application site is located on the ground floor, to the rear of an existing building with residential use above and immediately to the south. As such, the part conversion to residential use would not raise any amenity issues.

Whilst no provision for private outdoor amenity space is associated with this application, the location of the property is within short walking distance of sufficient areas of accessible public open space and is therefore considered acceptable.

Site Context

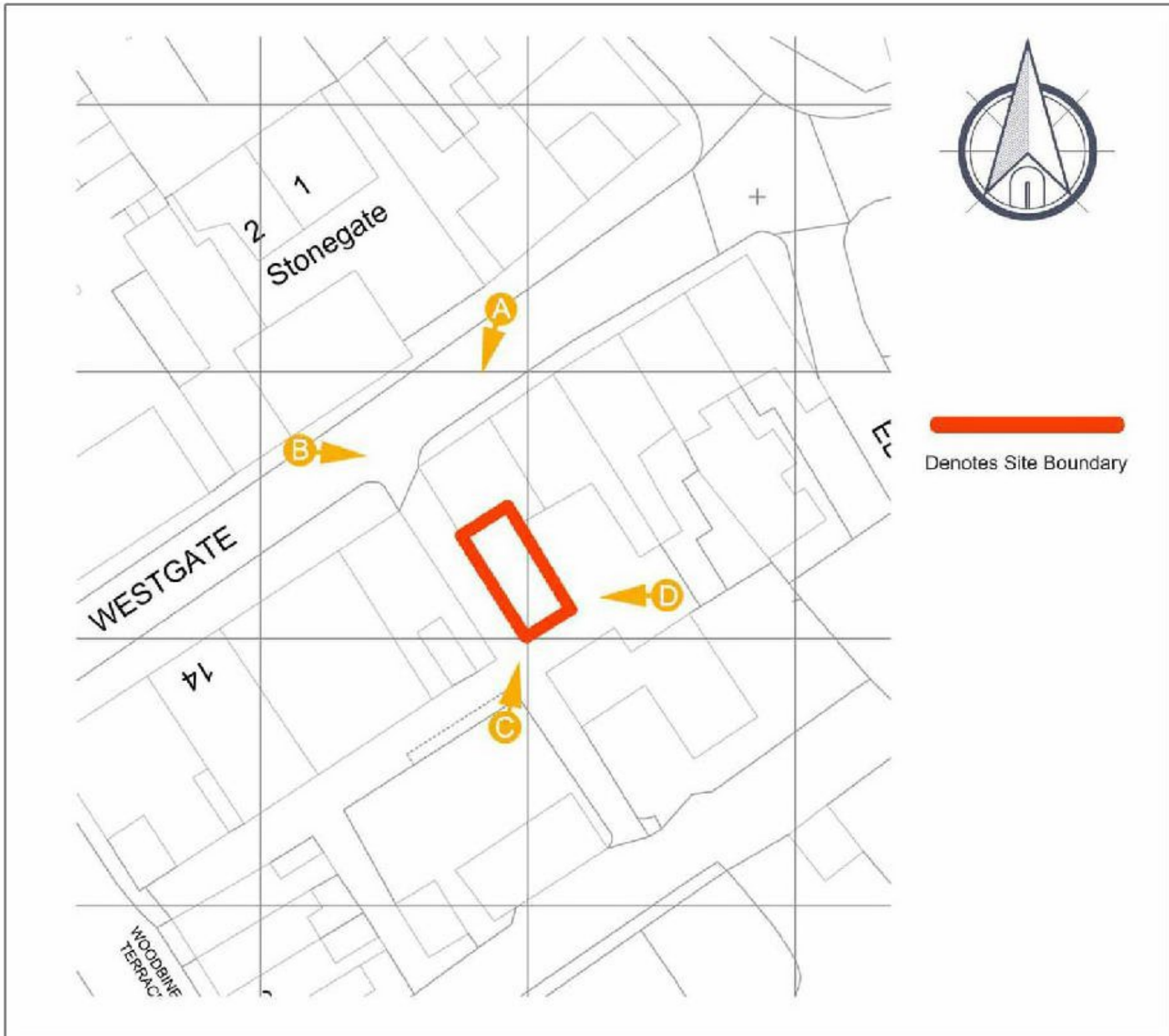
Vallum House is located on the south side of Main Street, located adjacent to Boots Chemist. Vallum House is a two-storey end terrace property with retail (formally Pound Land) at ground floor accessed off Main Street, and 2 no. 1 bed flats at first floor accessed off a private courtyard to the rear.

The plot is bound to the northwest by Main Street, to the northeast by retail units, to the southeast by residential properties and to the southwest by an access lane connecting Main Street with Grange Road.



Bing Maps view of the application site and its context

Existing Site Photos



Amount | Scale

Existing retail unit GIA		94 sq m
New ground floor flat GIA		44 sq m
Remaining retail unit GIA		50 sq m

This proposal will provide residential accommodation at ground level to include:

1. Open plan kitchen/living/dining space
2. Family bathroom
3. Double Bedroom with integrated storage

Use

The existing ground floor building use class is 'E(a) Display or retail sale of goods'. The proposed scheme seeks the change use of 42 sq m of retail space to form one residential ground floor flat with use class C3(a) Dwellinghouses.

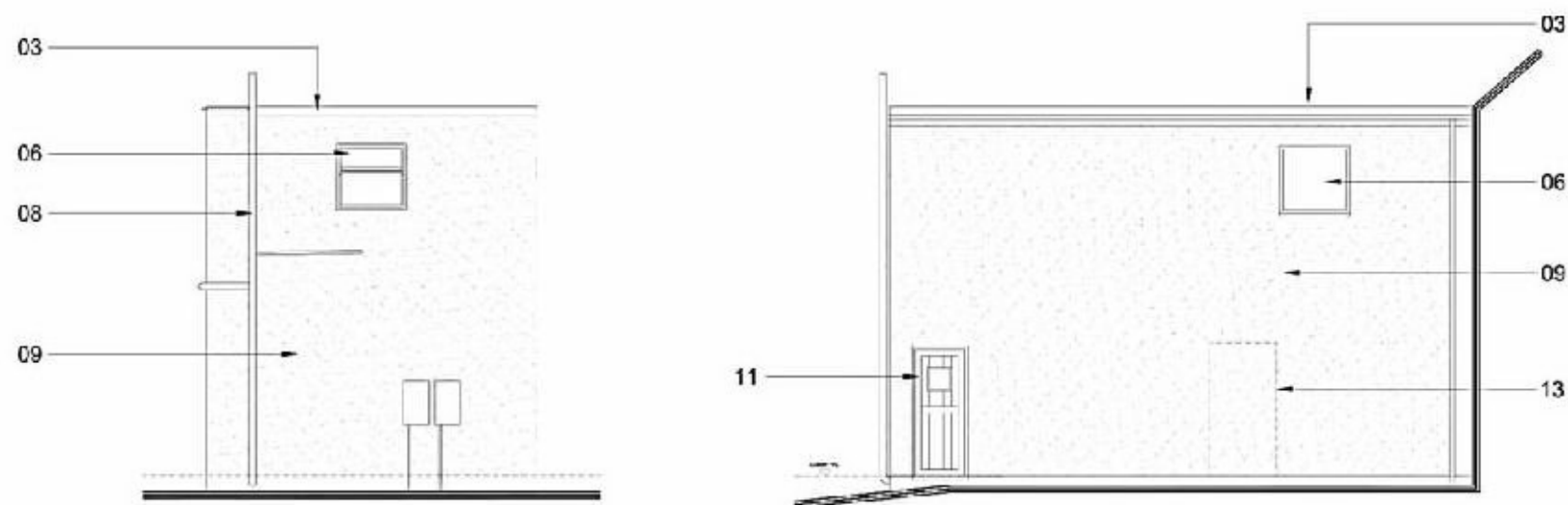
The self-contained flat has been carefully designed to utilise only the rear space of the existing retail unit to reduce visual impact and ensure the streetscape on Westgate remains unchanged.

Appearance | Existing

Vallum House is part facing brickwork, part pebble dash with single glazed timber shop front to the principal elevation at ground floor and timber framed windows at first floor, complete with pitched slate roof to the front and flat felt roof to the rear.



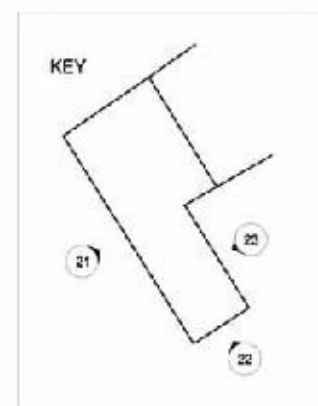
(EX) 21 Existing South West Elevation



(EX) 22 Existing South East Elevation

(EX) 23 Existing North East Elevation

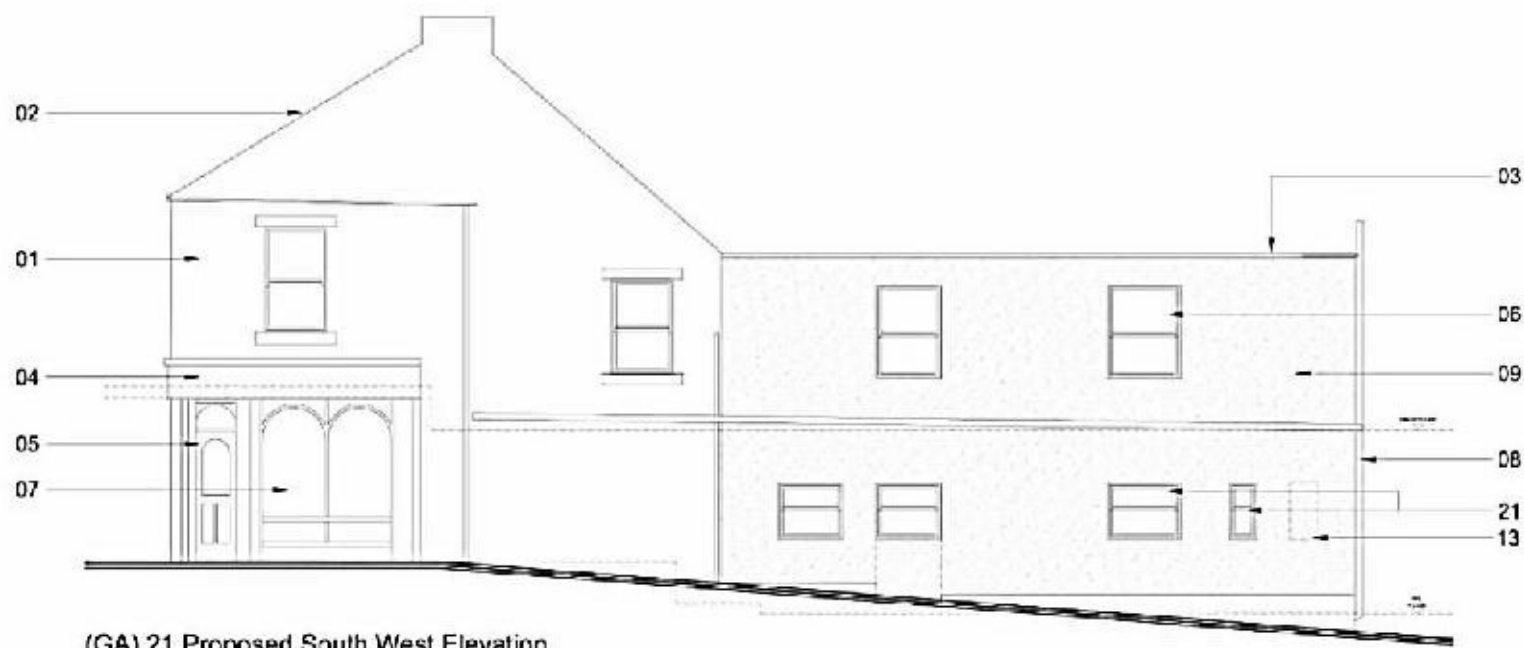
EXISTING MATERIALS	
01	Facing brickwork
02	Slate roof tiles
03	Felt roof
04	Timber shop fascia
05	Timber door
06	Double glazed timber framed windows
07	Single glazed timber framed windows
08	UPVC SVP
09	Pebble dash render
10	Black UPVC RWP's
11	White UPVC double glazed door
12	Timber fascias & soffits
13	Former window/door openings blocked up (dashed)



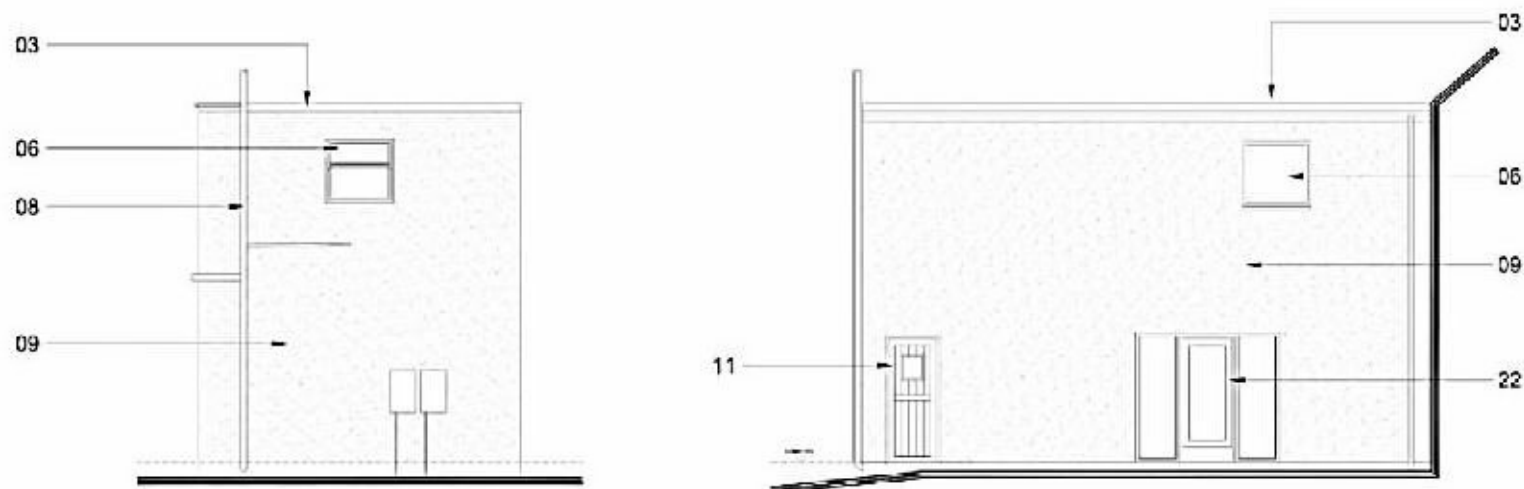
Appearance | Proposed

The former door in the northeast elevation, formally blocked up, will be opened up and reinstated offering access into the new flat. Former blocked-up windows in the southwest elevation will be opened up and reinstated drawing natural light into the bedroom, bathroom and open plan kitchen/living/dining space.

New windows will match existing timber windows in terms of scale, colour and appearance. The new entrance door will match the existing adjacent UPVC door, complete with glazed side screens. Pebble dashed elevations in poor repair will be made good to match existing to improve aesthetic.



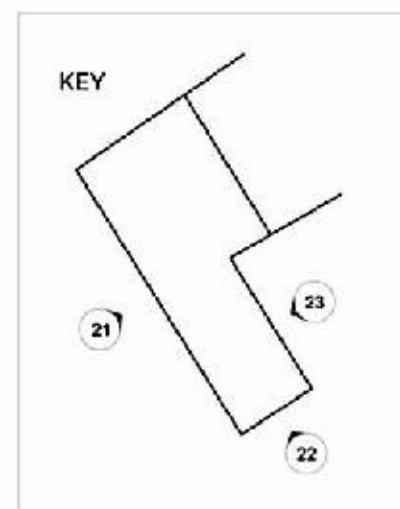
(GA) 21 Proposed South West Elevation



(GA) 22 Proposed South East Elevation

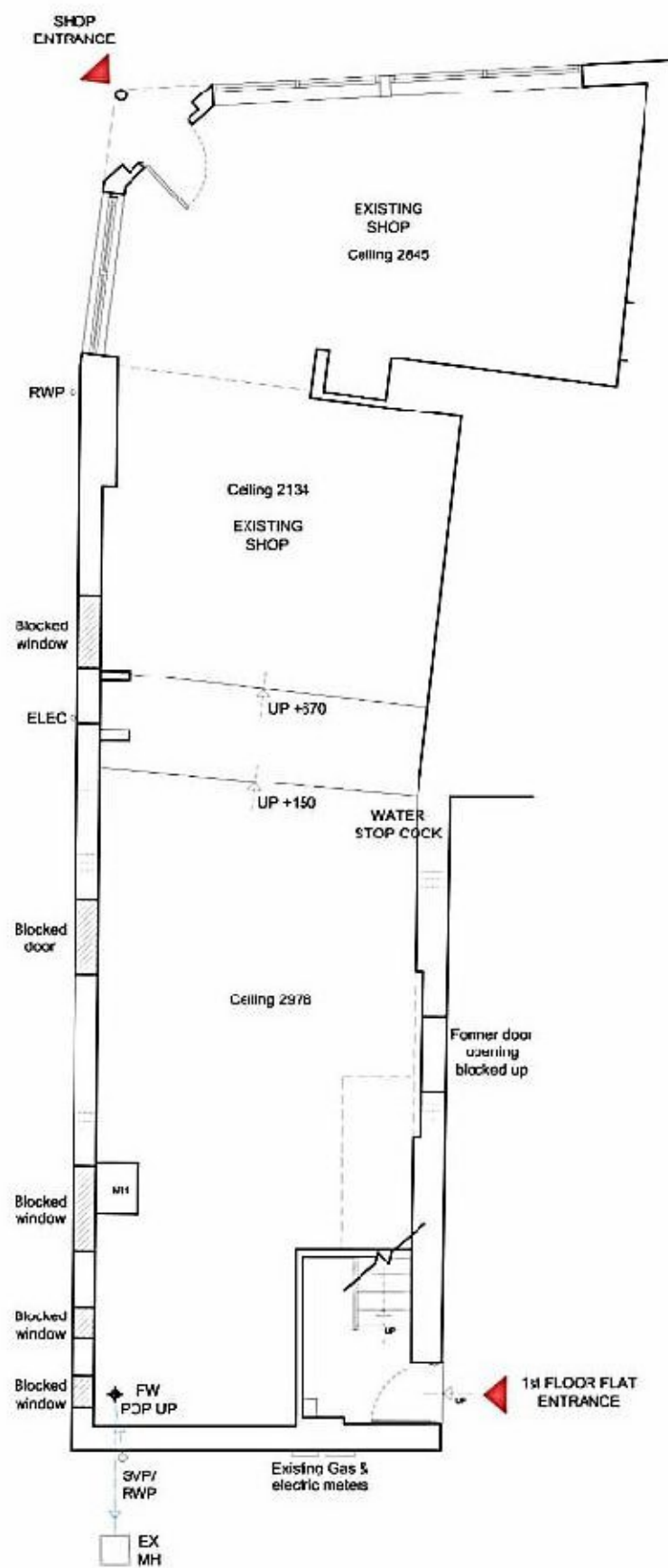
(GA) 23 Proposed North East Elevation

EXISTING MATERIALS	
01	Facing brickwork
02	Slate roof tiles
03	Felt roof
04	Timber shop fascia
05	Timber door
06	Double glazed timber framed windows
07	Single glazed timber framed windows
08	UPVC SVP
09	Pebble dash render
10	Black UPVC RWP's
11	White UPVC double glazed door
12	Timber fascias & soffits
13	Former window/door openings blocked up (dashed)
PROPOSED MATERIALS	
21	Double glazed timber framed windows
22	White UPVC double glazed timber door & glazed side panels

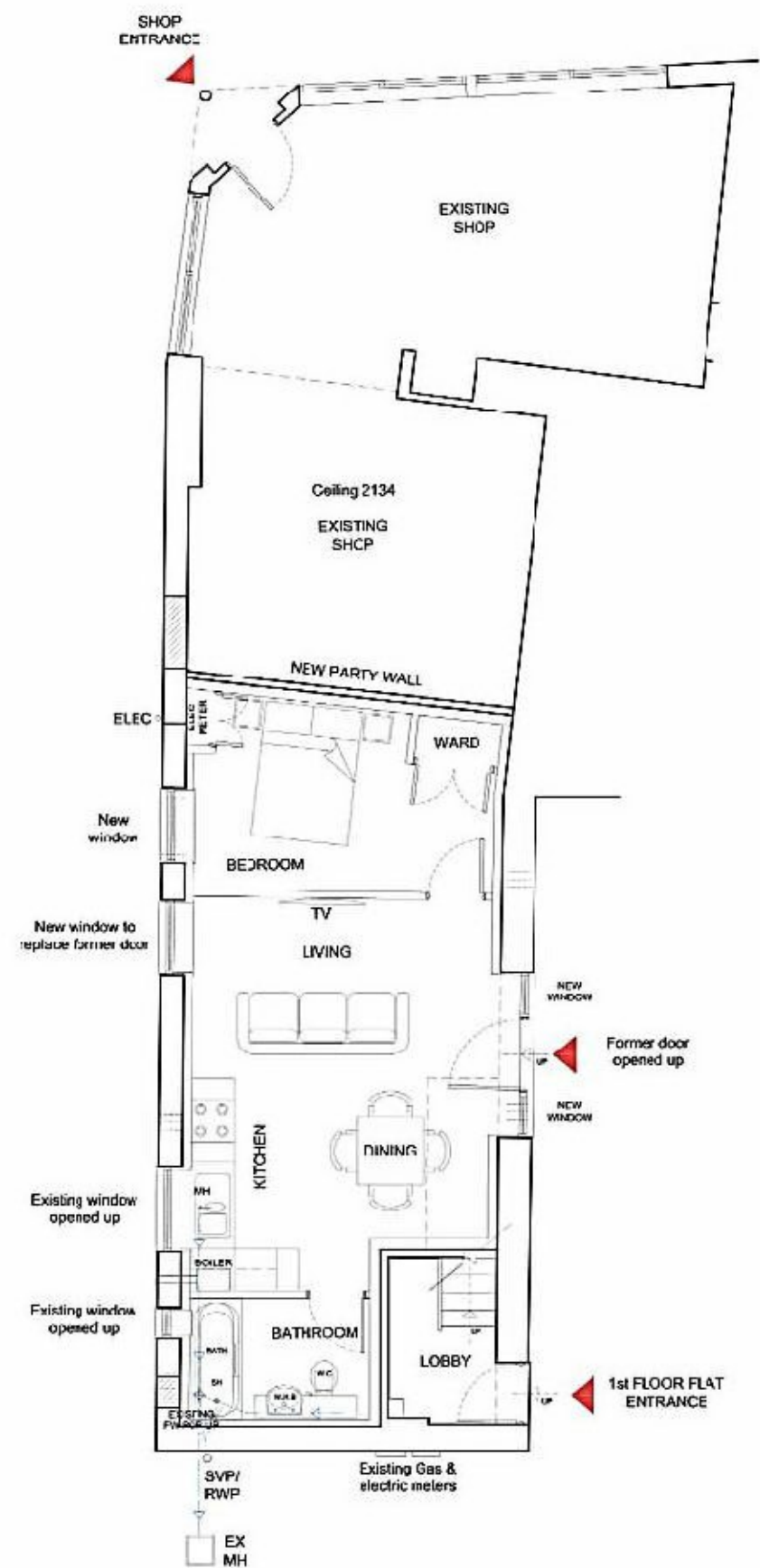


Layout

Access is gained into the property from the northeast elevation via a private courtyard into a spacious open-plan living, kitchen, dining space. From the open-plan space, access to 1 no. double bedroom and bathroom is gained.



(EX) 01 Existing Ground Floor Plan



(GA) 01 Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Access

Existing access in to the retail unit off Westgate via the principal entrance will remain unchanged. Similarly, access to the existing first floor flats will also remain unchanged.

The proposed ground floor flat will be accessed off the existing private courtyard via a former opening (currently blocked up) in the northeast elevation.

Highways

The Local Plan seeks to create a sustainable pattern of development which will result in a reduction in the need to travel, with the majority of development focused in the most sustainable locations.

Whilst the development offering one bed residential accommodation does not offer private parking, it is located in the heart of all amenities, with bus and train links within a short walking distance resulting in the promotion of sustainable travel thus supporting positive health and wellbeing.

Refuse

Existing refuse is located to the south west of the development. Two 240L wheelie bins will be provided for resident use to include one general waste and one recyclable waste. Refer to drawing '21VHH (EW)01&02 Existing & Proposed Site Plan'.

Drainage

Foul drainage and surface water will be disposed of via connection to the existing drainage and main sewer connections on site serving the existing property. Refer to drawing '21VHH (EW)01&02 Existing & Proposed Site Plan'.

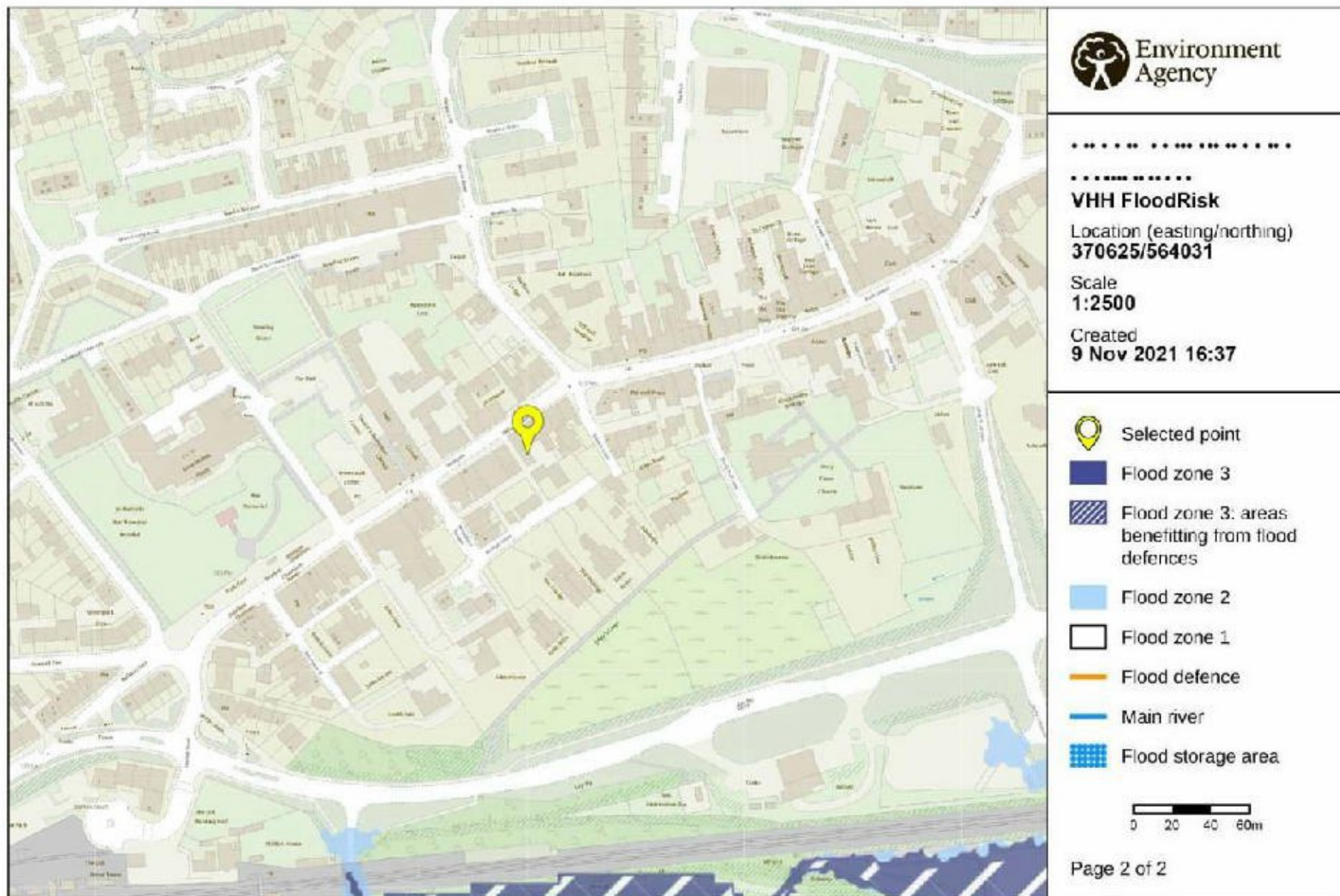
Ecology

The proposals are not considered to impact on the ecology, landscape, tranquillity or cultural heritage of Haltwhistle's conservation area.

Flood Risk

The proposed development site is in flood zone 1 as indicated on the Environment Agency Flood Map below which is identified as land assessed having a low probability of flooding and less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.

This application is for the Change of Use of an existing building in FZ1, therefore no Flood Risk Assessment is required to support the Planning Application.



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