



# 7 Bedford St Leamington Spa

Design and Access Statement

13/08/21

# 1.0 Introduction

BPN Architects have been asked to look at the re-development options for No. 7 Bedford St in the centre of Leamington Spa. The purpose of the re-development would be to provide a viable and long term sustainable future for the existing local fashion store on the site called 'Kong'. Their ambition is to grow the business and increase the amount of retail space they currently have on the site, which they own.

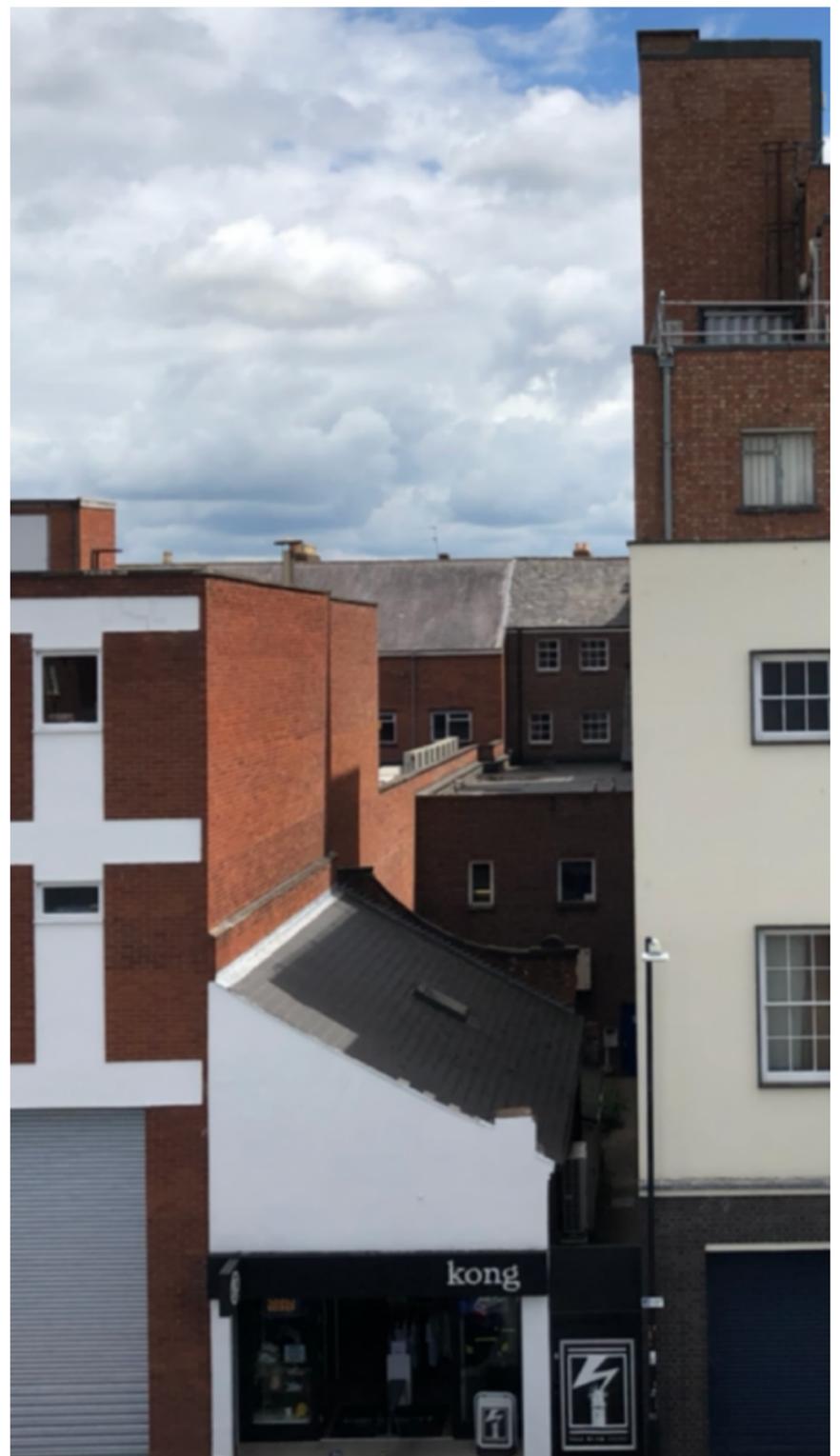
Alongside the increase of retail floor space they would also like to utilise the sites location to provide residential accommodation above the retail space which will help to diversify their business and make the project viable in the long term.

The site is currently occupied by a 1 storey building which houses a retail store called 'Kong'. To the rear of the site is a vacant courtyard space. Beyond the red line boundary is a 2 storey building which is in use by 'The Works' which fronts onto the Parade (No.58). There is a fire escape and access door to the upper floors located on the ground floor of 'The Works' that exits directly into the application site. There is a legal right of way down the side of the Kong building to emergency fire escape access only. The route down the side of the building is currently closed off with a gate.

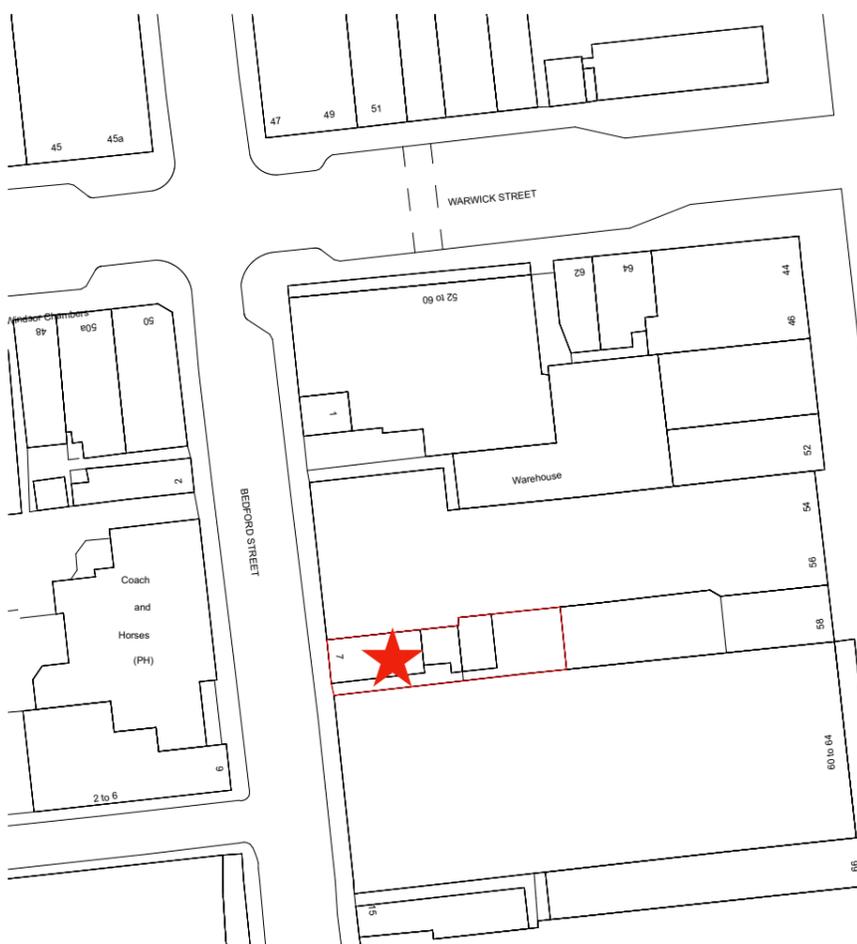
The building is flanked on both sides by very large mid 20th Century buildings which were constructed to increase the size of the retail units on Parade. It is understood that both buildings are not in use above ground floor level. To the left hand side of the site is the WHSmith building with a large roller shutter loading bay directly adjacent to the site. To the right handside is the rear of 'H&M', again with a large loading bay adjacent to the site boundary and former entrance doors which are no longer in use.

This side of Bedford Street does not feel like a retail frontage due to the large expanses of large loading bay doors, large expanses of blank elevations and disused shopfronts along its length. The focus of the buildings is very much towards the Parade.

Photograph of the site as existing



Location Plan - NTS



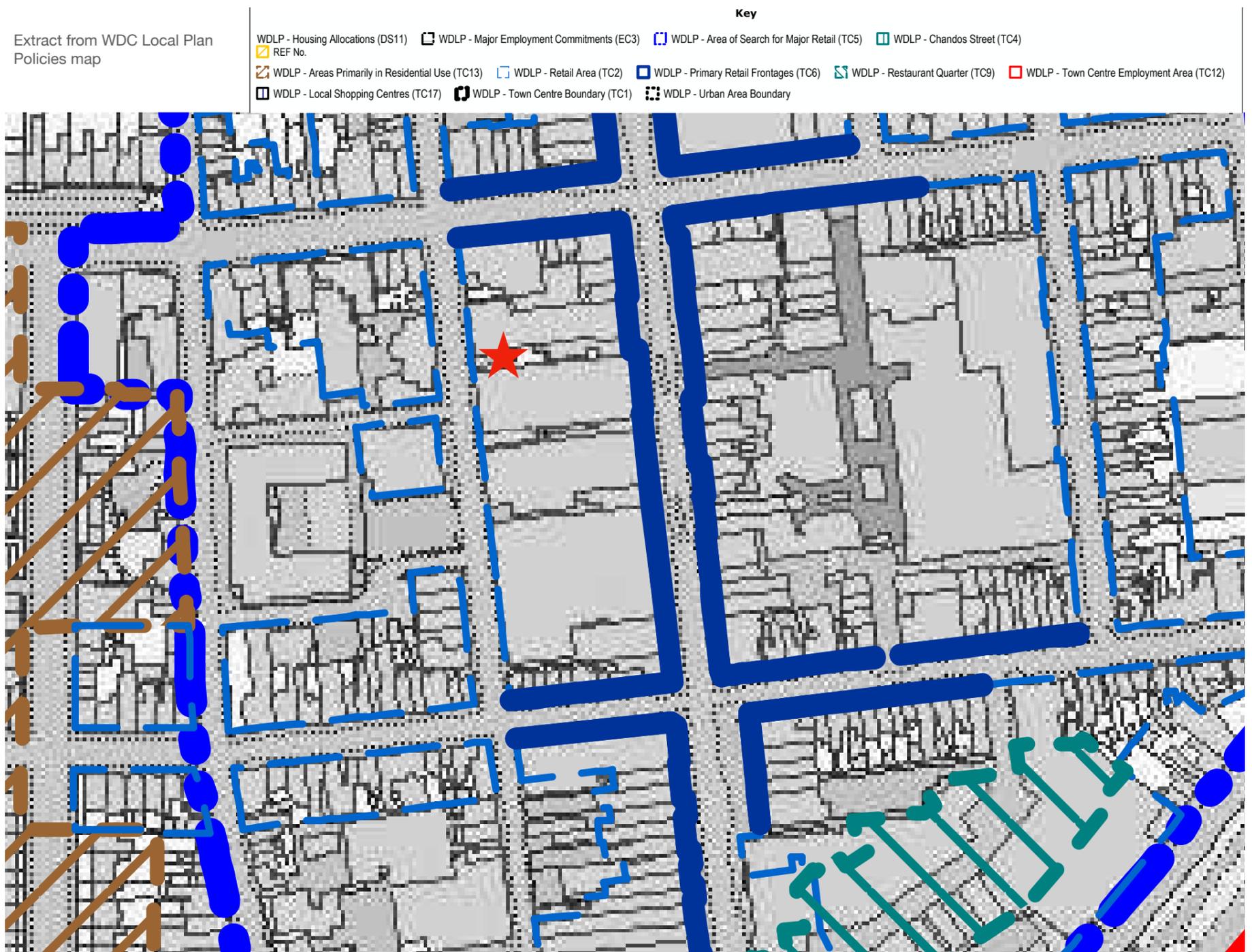


## 2.0 Policy Context

The local plan policies map identified the site as a Retail Area where policy TC2 applies which seeks to maintain a core retail area in Leamington Spa.

Policies TC14 and TC15 also appear to be relevant which encourage the use of upper floors of retail buildings to be residential as part of creating diverse and active town centres. Encouraging greater living in town centre locations can also enhance personal safety by increasing natural surveillance.

The application site has the potential to provide a positive benefit to Bedford St in the form of introducing a better quality building and bringing forward sustainable residential development on the upper floors.



The site lies within the Conservation Area with Bedford Street briefly referenced in the area appraisal. The appraisal lists Bedford St as a service / mews road. The description attributed to 'Mews Roads in General' doesn't seem to accord to this particular section of Bedford St where buildings are generally large mid 20th Century buildings of 3 - 4 storeys.

The mews road context has been significantly eroded by the introduction of the large rear elevations of the 20th century department stores that face onto Parade and also on the opposite side, the introduction of large department stores, surface car parks and further 20th century development which has eroded the historic plot widths and scale of a mews street in this particular location.



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## Service Streets off Central Area (mews roads)






**Principal Mews Roads**

- Trinity Street
- Plymouth Place
- New Street
- Gordon Street
- Russell Street
- Bedford Street
- Tavistock Street

**Mews Roads in General**

- Character of mews road should be retained.
- Significant part of infrastructure of grid iron plan.
- Early 19th Century mews generally have mews buildings for stabling, later developments from mid 19th Century onwards have no separate stabling. This principle should be maintained where new developments are proposed and Mews buildings should be avoided in areas which traditionally had no buildings.
- Small scale buildings originally stabling normally 1½ storeys.
- Brick and slate roofs.
- Small windows, sometimes metal casements on cast iron frames.
- High brick walls with red terracotta copings.
- Mature trees play an important part in softening existing mews situations.
- The small scale character of Mews Roads should always be retained.

Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area







AREA  
28

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## Middle Parade








- Classical elegance of Regency buildings.
- Later 19th Century infill at House of Fraser building - typical department store architecture.
- Woolworths, Marks and Spencer and Burtons early and mid 20th Century retail architecture.
- Appropriate to the scale of the east side. Appropriate shopfronts and signage need to be Maintained.
- Classical portico's remain between shopfronts on east side.
- Entrances to Royal Priors Shopping Centre which was carefully designed behind classical facades.
- Good shopfronts and signage in accordance with Shopfront Design Guide.
- Need to maintain strong control over shop fronts and signage.

Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area







AREA  
15b

# 3.0 Planning History

## Planning History

**W/01/1283** - Erection of a five storey building to provide A3 use on the ground floor with separate access to 7 flats on upper floors (including provision of roof garden at first floor level and balcony at second and third floor level), after demolition of existing building; provision of access to retail unit on Parade to be retained. -Granted 20 Dec 2001.

The drawings for this consent are publicly accessible on Warwick DC's website and extracts are provided here for reference. The proposal is a ground floor commercial space with 6 small 1 bedrooms units and 1 large 2 bedroom unit with a contemporary facade, although now dated in its appearance.

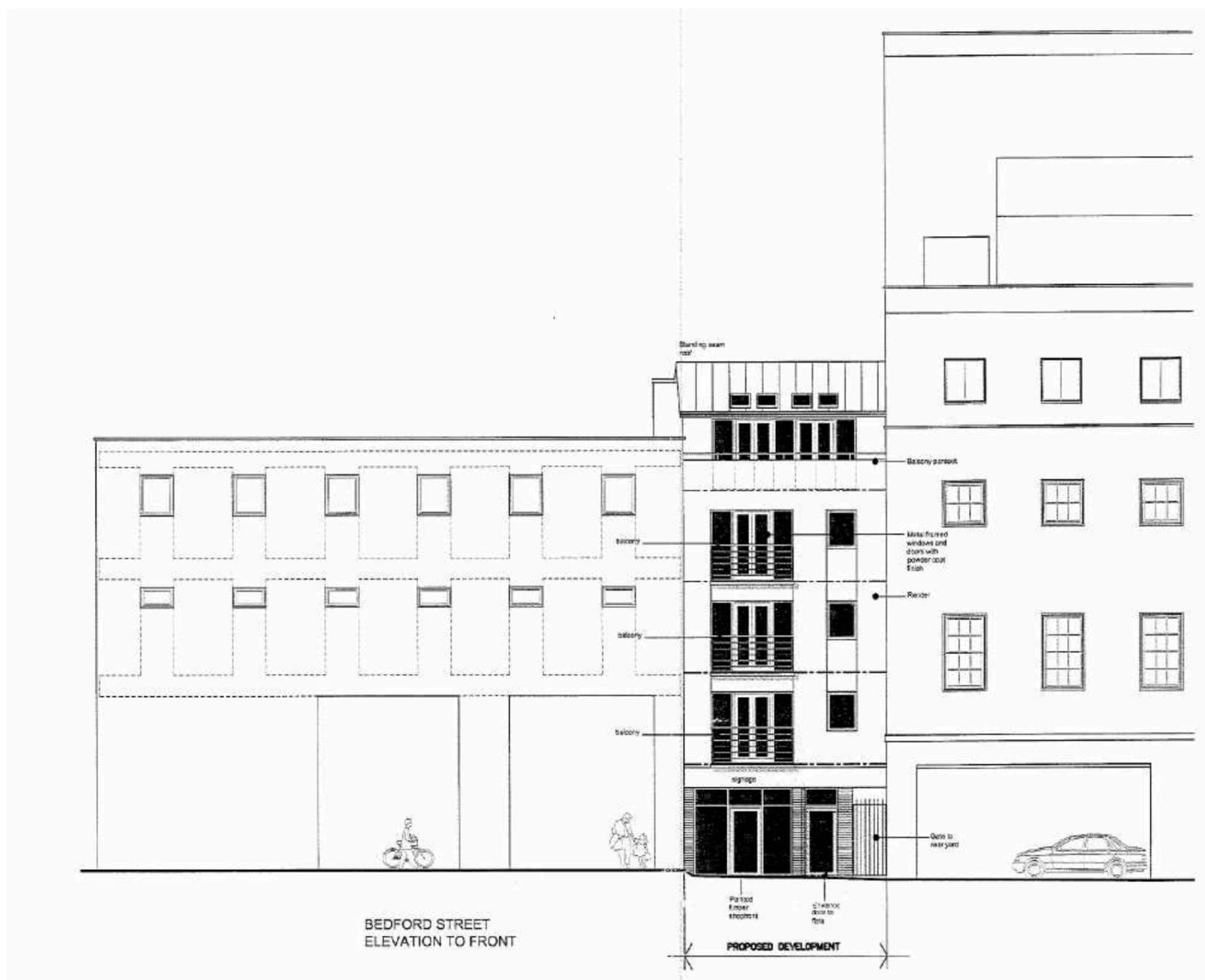
We are not aware of any major policy shifts that would over ride the principles established by the granting of this consent in 2001.

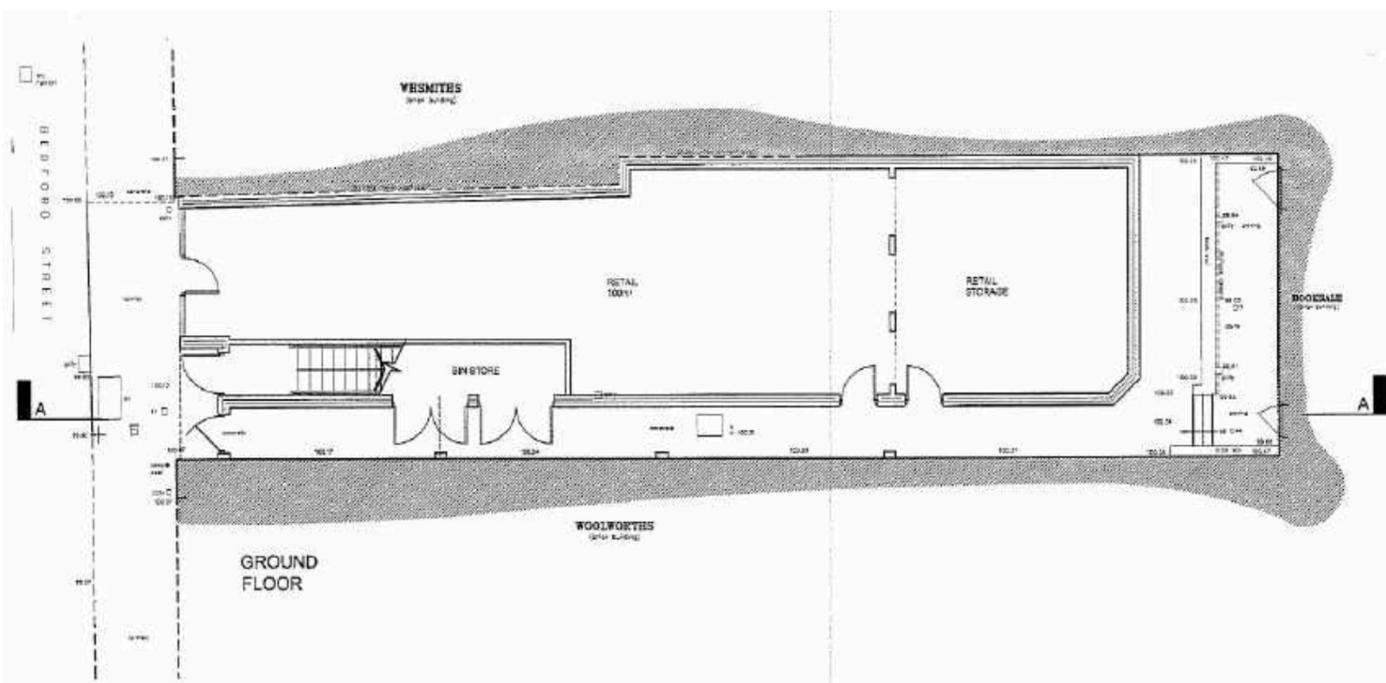
### W/06/1782

A further application for the "Demolition of existing retail shop. Construction of retail store, with offices and residential over" was granted approval on 22nd Feb 2007. Whilst no drawings are publicly available the description confirms that the principle of demolition and the replacement of the existing building with a building of greater height and in part residential use was acceptable. We do not see that anything has materially changed which would go against these principles and we assume that this builds on the principles agreed in the 2001 planing consent.

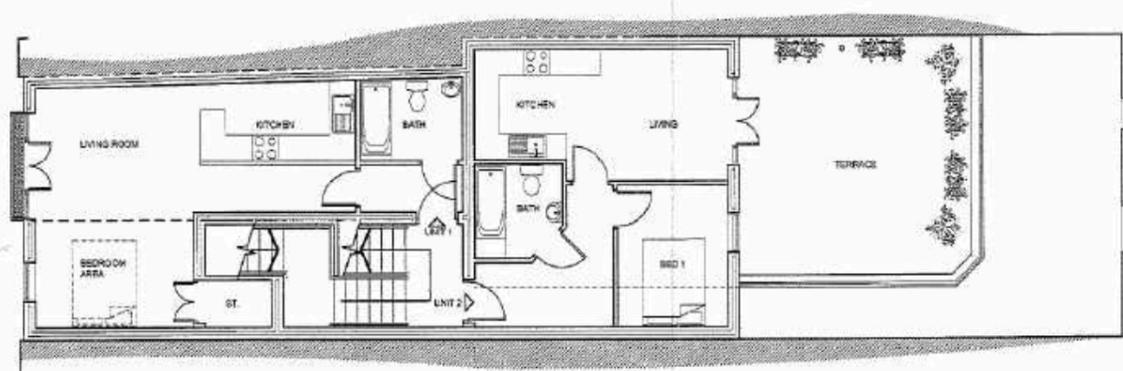
**W/11/1382** - Proposed change of use from shop (A1) to Sui Generis Mixed-use consisting of shop (A1) and cafe (A3) - Granted 01 Feb 2012

**W/13/0326** - Display of 1no. Backlit fascia sign and 1no. non-Non-illuminated projecting hanging sign - Granted 07 May 2013

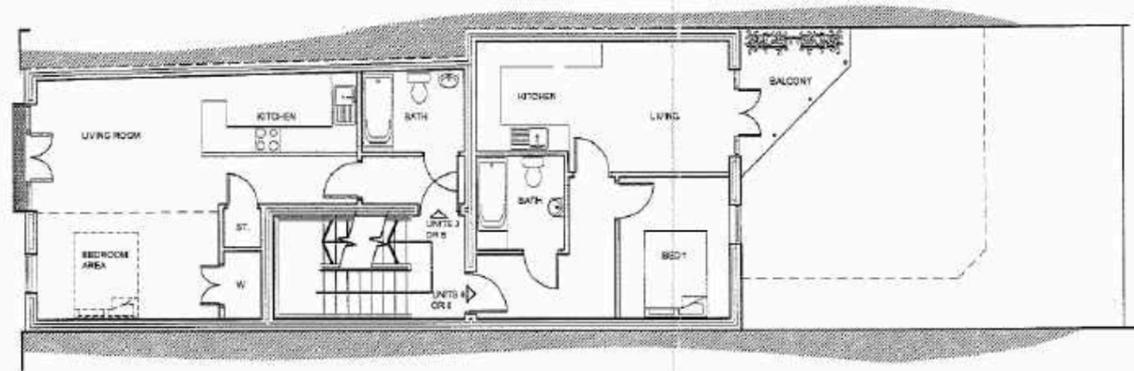




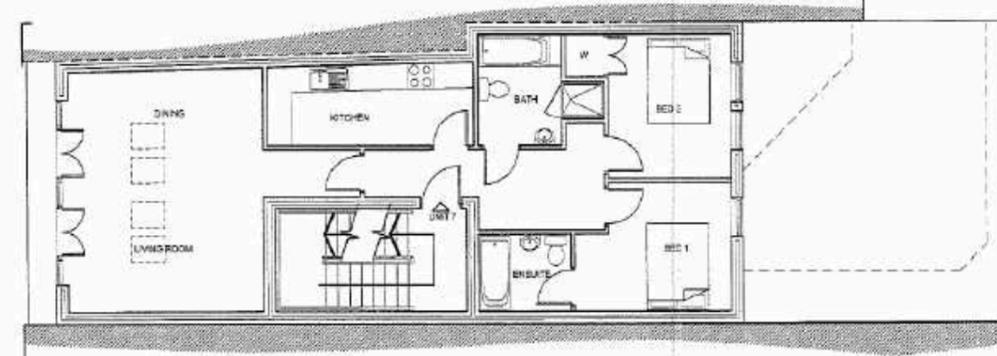
GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR  
UNITS 1 & 2



SECOND &  
THIRD FLOORS  
UNITS 3-6



FOURTH FLOOR  
UNIT 7

UNIT	AREA (m <sup>2</sup> )	AREA (ft <sup>2</sup> )
1	43.4	467
2	39	420
3	45.5	490
4	39	420
5	45.5	490
6	39	420
7	81	872



REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE	DRN	CHK
1	As Issued	05/12/07	SK	ANF
2	Window removed from rear face front face of building added back window positions shown in Schedule building	02/01/08	SK	ANF
3	As Issued	06/12/07	SK	ANF

**ROBOTHAMS**  
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PROJECT  
**SHOP AND FLATS  
7 BEDFORD STREET  
LEAMINGTON SPA**

DRAWING  
**PROPOSED  
FLOOR PLANS**

SCALE 1:100 DRAWN IS  
DATE 1.8.01 CHECKED ANF  
DWG NO 1605-02 REVISION C

## 4.0 Pre-Application Advice

### Conclusion of Pre-Application Advice

The scheme was submitted for Pre-Application Advice - application number PRE 20 / 0082 and registered on 25/08/2020 .

The recommendation from this application was "Likely to support subject to amendments"

Below are the key points raised within the pre-application advice (in blue) and our responses to them:

1.0 - *"The principle of a replacement building which is 5 storeys is not considered unacceptable because the design you have proposed, which is largely down to features such as the fenestration arrangement, reads more akin to a 3/4 storey building which appears more in line with the appearance of the surrounding buildings."* pg. 3

- The scheme submitted for pre-application had a double height retail space, this has changed been changed to residential on the first floor, meaning the frontal fenestration reads as such.

2.0 - *"As currently illustrated in the submitted documents, the top floor of the proposed building would sit above the highest part of the principal elevation of the adjacent building (the H&M building) whose roof steps back before the next floor of the building steps up. This currently results in a dormer in the proposed building, which, in officers' opinion, would be visually obtrusive and would represent an incongruous feature in the street scene in this particular location."*

*To address this, and to remove the need for the dormer, the two top floors of the proposed building should be set back so that they are no further forward than the set backs on the adjacent building to the south."* pg. 3

- We have removed the dormer arrangement submitted in pre-application and in place have stepped the building back to match that of the adjacent building. This was thoroughly tested which is highlighted in section 5.0 Design Development in this document.

3.0 - *"...primary concern from the conservation officer that the proposed shopfront is too tall and as such needs to be considerably reduced in height "* pg. 3

- This has changed to a single storey following the planning officers advice.

4.0 - *"The proposed windows to the apartments are currently shown as having 24 panes of glass. In the conservation officer's opinion, this is at odds with the street scene and the recommendation is that a maximum of 12 would reflect those in the adjacent building to the south. The preference is also for these to be sash windows which is characteristic of the conservation area and also reflects those in adjacent buildings"* pg. 4

- We agree with the advice to change the number of panes as it is more in keeping with the surrounding context. However our intention is to propose Crittall style windows as opposed to sash for a more contemporary look.

5.0 - *"...recommended that a sand and cement render finish would be more appropriate for the conservation area. pg. 4*

- We would like to continue with the white painted brick finish for the external elevation as proposed in the pre-application as we believe that this would give a more contemporary look to scheme. This white brick will look very similar to the requested white render finish requested and we believe this is more in keeping due to the immediate context of Bedford Street being majority brickwork.

6.0 - *"...the proposed height of the new building, the most important consideration will be to the proposed distance separation between windows, both at the front and the rear of the building."* pg. 4

- An acoustic survey has been commissioned to address this point. Please see additional documentation.

7.0 - *"...the Design Guide makes provision for outdoor amenity space, even for apartments..."* pg. 5

- We believe the balconies we have proposed are sufficient and in line with the design guide.

8.0 - *"Whilst acknowledging that similar schemes have been previously granted for the site, there are concerns about the noise impacts of the late night bar on the proposed residential apartments...The proposed floor plans have located bedrooms at the rear elevation of the development which is a positive..."* pg. 6

- An acoustic survey has been commissioned to address this point. Please see additional documentation.

### Conclusion of Pre-Application Advice

*"In the event that a formal planning application were to be submitted, for the reasons outlined above, it is likely that the LPA would be able to support the proposed development, subject to some amendments being made to the design to reflect the comments made above in respect of the visual impacts on the character of the area/street scene and more importantly, the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. "* pg. 9

# 5.0 Design Development

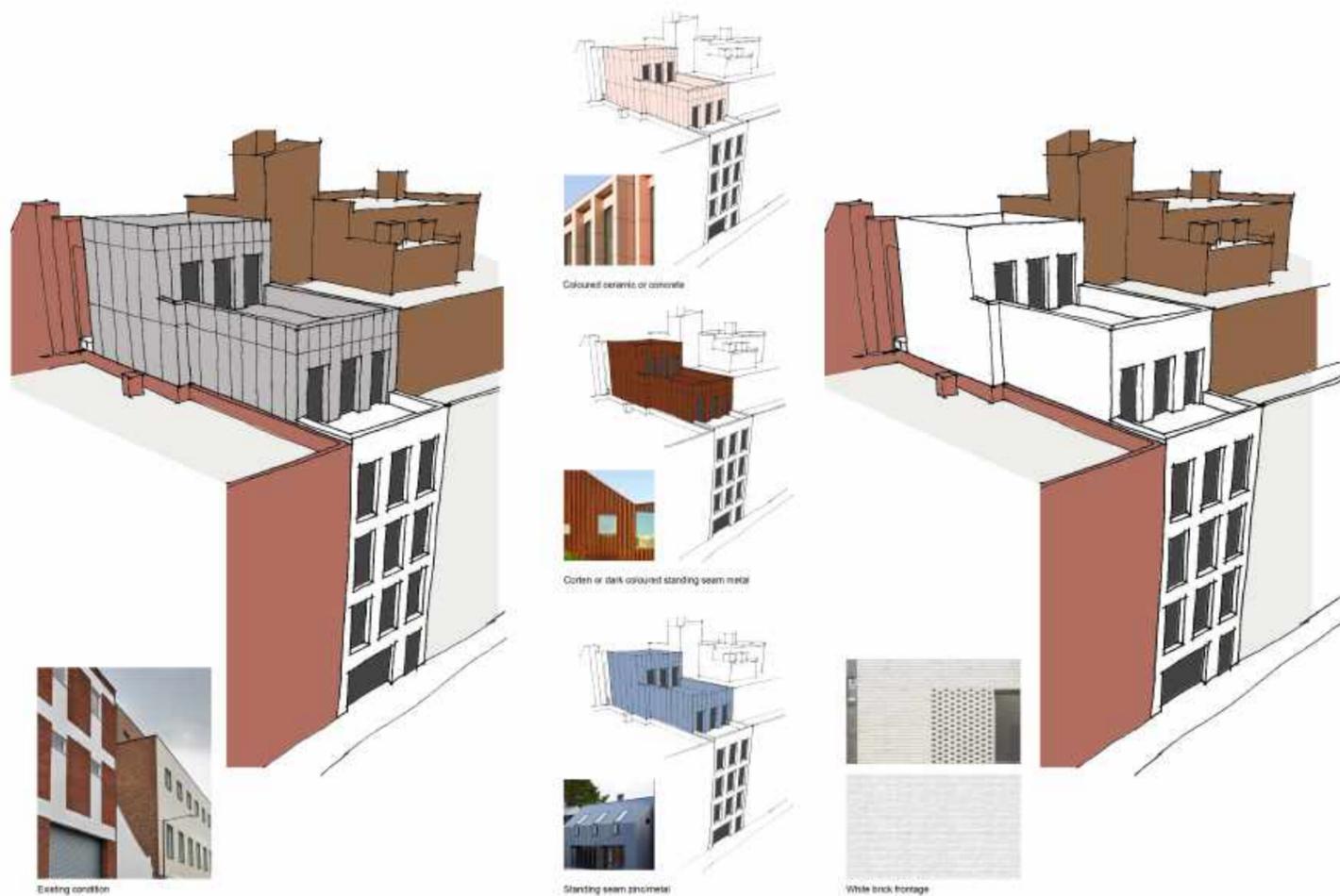
## Mansard/Top Storey Studies

After the pre-application advice we developed the front facade and its relationship with the adjacent buildings. This led us into disregarding the mansard style roof in favour of a roof that stepped with the adjacent buildings as shown in these sketches. We also experimented with the materiality but settled on the white painted brick



7 Bedford St. - SK 0006

BPN ARCHITECTS

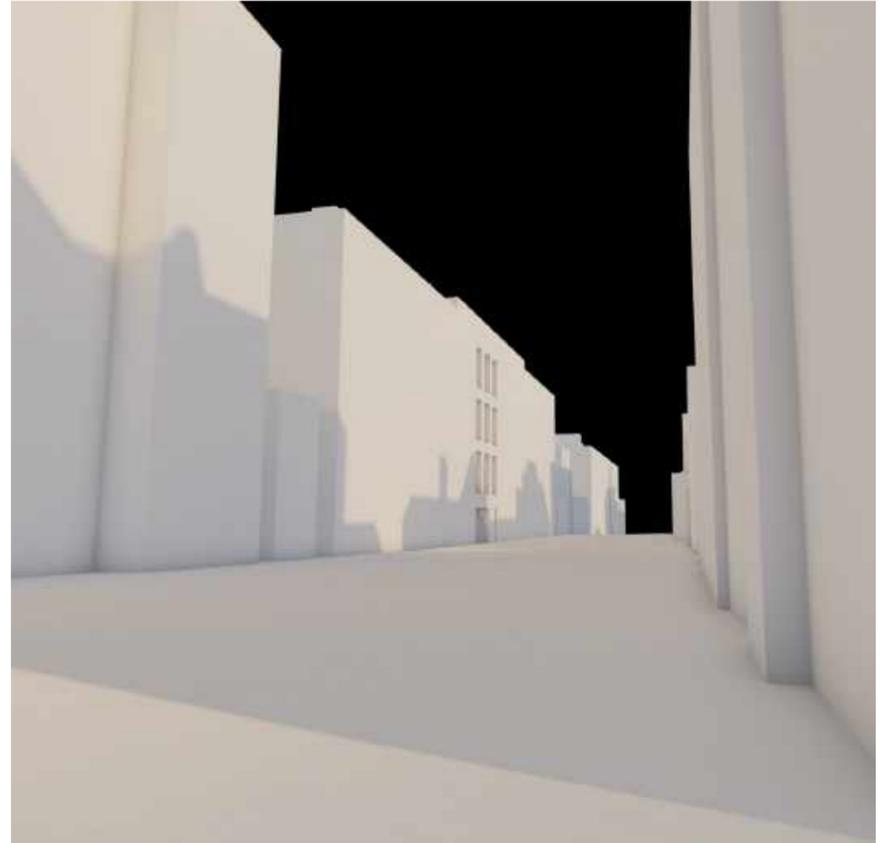
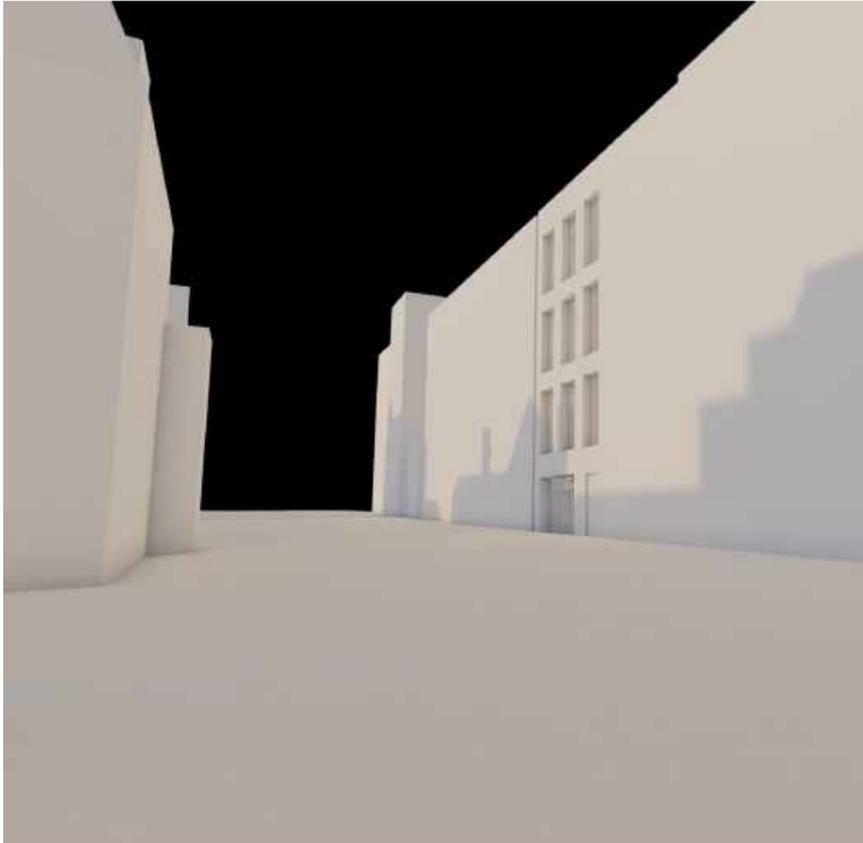


7 Bedford St. - 3D Views 06

BPN ARCHITECTS

## Street Scenes

An important aspect of the project was how it sat within the context of Bedford Street. This was developed through 3D modelling the street scene to assess the impact of the stepped top storeys and the scale of the front fenestration. This again lead us to favour the stepped roof option over the mansard.



## 6.0 Proposal

### Use

It is proposed to maintain the A1 use at Ground floor and it is intended this space would be used by 'Kong'. The retail floor space will be increased in area which is a positive addition to the site and conforms with policy TC2.

Above the retail unit will be 1 x bedroom and 3 x 2 bedroom apartments, which have the principle living room to the street frontage, providing day time natural surveillance, with bedrooms located towards the rear, away from the noise of the street. This configuration would conform to policy TC14 and TC15 in encouraging 'living over the shop'.

The ground level right of way to the rear of the site is to be maintained and significantly improved to provide access to a staircase that accesses the residential lobby towards the rear of the site.

Due to the slim nature of the site, it is not possible to have a residential entrance direct from the street as it would significantly erode the available retail frontage, which is key to 'Kong's future and aspirations to grow as a leading independent retailer in Leamington Spa. Their confidence in aspiring the grow their retail area bucks the trend of many town centre retailers and will have a positive effect on Bedford St and the town centre shopping area.

### Massing

The site is a unique site in Leamington in that it is wedged in between two rear elevations of large department store buildings. Each flanking building, whilst appearing as 3 storey is the equivalent of 4-5 residential floors in height. The ground floors of the adjacent buildings are 'dead' in that they contain blank elevations with large roller shutter loading bay doors.

It is proposed to infill the gap with a 5 storey building in a similar form to that consented in 2001. However our reference is to take the form of a Regency style townhouse, although detailed in a contemporary way. The overall height of the building would transition from the WHSmith building to the H&M building.

In order to give maximum visibility into the retail space, which is key to 'Kongs' business plan, a large shop front window is required to provide views from the street to encourage passers by to go into the store.

The elevations submitted and visuals show our intention, a simple and well detailed contemporary building that has its roots in Regency architecture without resorting to a pastiche copy, which wouldn't account for the sites individual character and that required by Kong as part of their established brand.

It is envisaged that the building would be faced in white brickwork to draw on the heritage of Leamington as a Regency Town in its colouration, but has texture that a brick facade can bring, particularly on Bedford Street which is a polar opposite in character when compared to Parade and Warwick Street.

The windows proposed are black metal "Crittall" style and draw on the heritage of the regency architecture of the area in their form and rhythm, but have a more contemporary finish. This finish relates to the more direct context of Bedford Street as opposed to the Parade and Warwick Street.



Proposed Bedford Street Elevation



## 7.0 Appearance

The images are intended to show the design intent in the form of a contemporary spin on the traditional Regency Townhouse. The key design features are:

1. Repeating vertical window proportions.
2. Large ground floor frontage
3. White brickwork to blend the Mews language with the traditional architecture of Leamington Spa.
4. Massing that steps back with the adjacent buildings to create a non-obtrusive street scene

Visual of the front fenestration and Bedford Street



Visual of the rear of the proposal



Street scene from the corner of Bedford Street and Windsor Place



Street scene from the corner of Bedford Street and Warwick Street



## 8.0 Section

In a similar way to the 2001 consent the massing of the proposal sits comfortably between the massing of the neighbouring buildings. It steps back with the adjacent W.H Smith building, reducing the massing as the building rises.

The rear elevation has a full length balcony off of the bedrooms, creating a private amenity space. The top floor of the building steps up at the rear of the building to provide a large and desirable duplex apartment that has a large open plan living area on the first level, with two large bedrooms on the upper level.

To the rear of the site is the ancillary accommodation, bins, bikes and residential entrance staircase and lobby.



## 9.0 Summary

We wish to seek the approval of Warwick District Council on the proposals contained within this document.

The site lies within the retail area of Leamington Spa which seeks to maintain the level of retail floor space through policy TC2. The proposals seek to increase the amount of floorspace for the established independent fashion brand 'Kong'. The proposals are bespoke to their requirements as they seek to buck the national trend and increase the size of their retail environment and grow their business.

The principle of demolition of the existing building has been confirmed by the granting of demolition on two occasions, in 2001 and 2006. Whilst we have not had sight of the 2006 consent, the 2001 consent confirms that a 5 storey frontage building was acceptable on the site, along with residential use above. This accords with policies TC14 and TC15, which seek to create active and vibrant town centre by introducing residential uses above retail uses.

When compared to the 2001 consent, the apartments within the proposed scheme are well over the national minimum standard of 70 sqm for a 2 bedroom 4 person unit. The units range in size from 91 sqm to 107 sqm. The number has of units has also been reduced from 7 units to 4 units which we see as an overall benefit as the standard of accommodation achieved by the proposals is greater than that which was awarded planning consent in 2001.

We have engaged with the Warwick District Council through our pre-application submission and have made amendments to the scheme in line with the advice given by the planning officer.

In summary, we feel that the proposals accord with national and local planning consent and are a positive contributor to the Conservation Area through a greater intensity of use of the site and in the design, materiality and standard of accommodation to be provided.