

Section 55 Town and Country Planning Act

Design and Access Statement  
Heritage Assessment

Conversion to form 7 dwellings together with extensions and construction of new mansard roof.  
(partial alternative scheme to granted prior approval)

30 St George's Place Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL50 3JZ

14 St Georges Business Centre - St Georges Square - Portsmouth - PO1 3EZ

023 9252 3352 - [help@tpexpert.org](mailto:help@tpexpert.org) - [www.tpexpert.org](http://www.tpexpert.org)

Jonathan McDermott, Keith Oliver, Helen Morris-Ruffle and Tim Perkins are Chartered Town Planners regulated  
by the Royal Town Planning Institute

the town planning experts is a trading name of RP(UK) Ltd Registered in England and Wales: 08298125 VAT  
REG 197 6095 56



**RTPI**

Chartered Town Planners

**Site Information**

Consultant	Jonathan McDermott
Client	Dr G Swinburne
Site Address	30 St George's Place Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL50 3JZ
LA	Cheltenham
Description of Development	Conversion to form 7 dwellings together with extensions and construction of new mansard roof. (partial alternative scheme to granted prior approval)
Pathway (PD/Application/Appeal)	Application

**Constraints Review**

Flood Risk Zone	1
Contaminated Land	No
Tree Preservation Order	No
Heritage Assets	Conservation Area and Surrounding Listed Buildings
Noise Abatement Areas	No
Explosive Hazard Areas	No
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	No
Special Protection Area	No
Site of Special Scientific Interest	No
RAMSAR Convention Site	No
Site of Importance to Nature Conservation	No
Article 4(2) Directions	No

## Local Policy Requirements

Local Plan/Core Strategy	Cheltenham Plan 2020 Joint Core Strategy
Effective Policies in Development Control	Adopted Cheltenham Plan 2020 (CP) Policies  D1 Design SL1 Safe and Sustainable Living  Adopted Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Policies  SD3 Sustainable Design and Construction SD4 Design Requirements SD8 Historic Environment SD10 Residential Development SD11 Housing Mix and Standards SD14 Health and Environmental Quality INF1 Transport Network
SPG/SPD's	Old Town Character Area and Management Plan (July 2007)

## Planning History

Relevant History	Renewal of temporary permission for use of premises for Social Action Group on ground floor with self-contained flat over Ref. No: 77/00705/PF   Status: Application Permitted  Renewal of temporary permission for Social Action group on ground floor with self-contained flat over Ref. No: 78/01135/PF   Status: Application Permitted  Change of use to office and workshop establishing small business and shop Ref. No: 82/01036/PF   Status: Application Permitted  Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use from office (Class B1(a)) to 2no. dwellings (Class C3) Ref. No: 21/01708/P3OPA   Status: No Prior Approval Needed
------------------	---

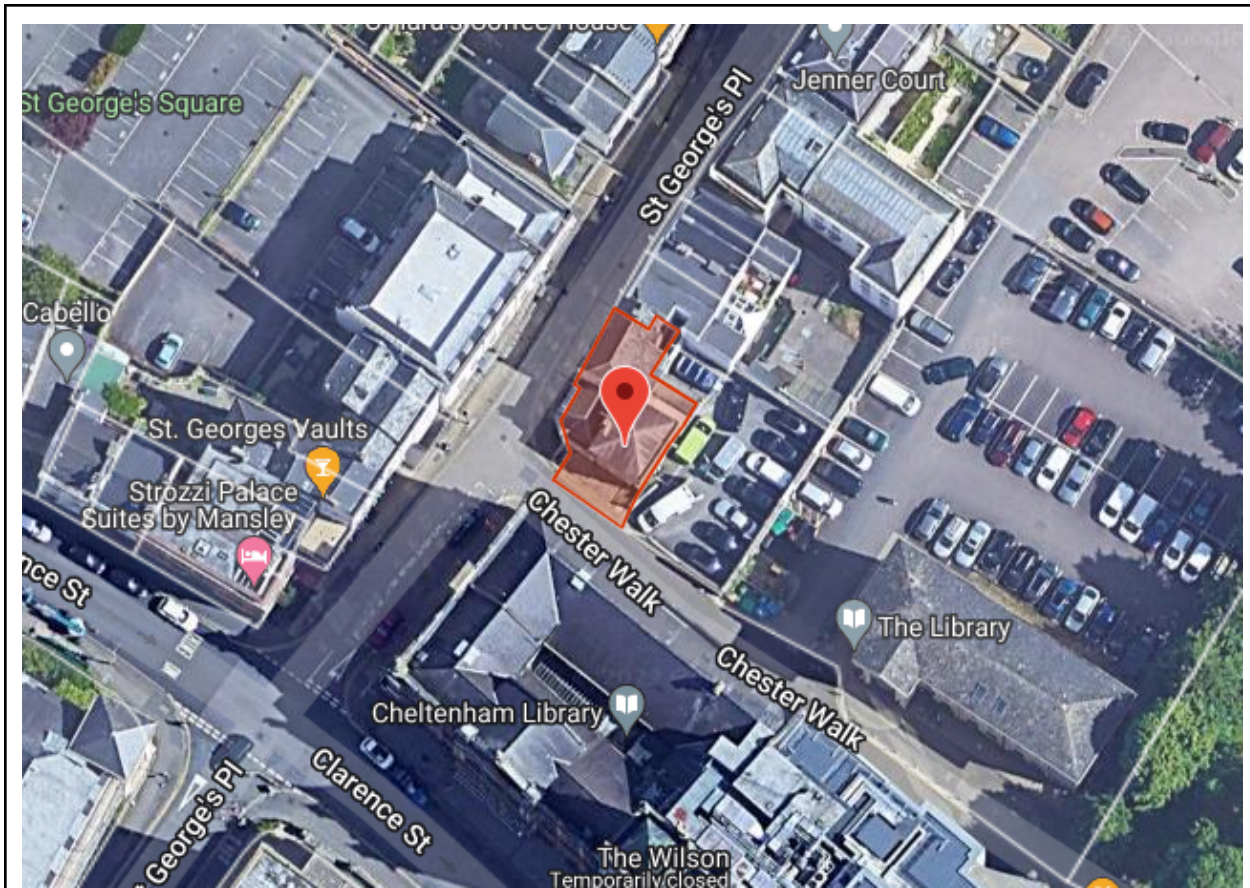
**Report Date** 4 May 2022

## 1. Introduction

1.1. The site is located on the corner of St George's Place and Chester Walk within the Old Town character area, one of 19 character areas that together form Cheltenham's Central conservation area. In addition, the site is within the Core Commercial Area and Principal Urban Area (PUA).

1.2. Although not listed or locally indexed, the existing building on site is identified as a positive building in the Townscape Analysis map within the Old Town character area appraisal; albeit, in part, it currently detracts from the conservation area. In addition, there are a number of important listed buildings in close proximity to the site.

1.3. The existing building provides accommodation over three floors, and its footprint covers much of the site. The building was formerly the Horse and Groom public house. A private car park is located immediately to the rear of the site.



Site Location



View onto the application site from St Georges Place

## Matters Pursuant to the application

1.4. Planning permission is sought for:

- Conversion of existing building to form 7 dwellings.
- Extensions to the front elevation
- Construction of new mansard roof.

## Summation of Case

1.5. Given the sensitivity of the site surrounded by heritage assets and within the Town Centre the applicants sought pre-application advice from the LPA. In summary that advice encouraged the development of the site in the manner proposed with a reduction in the number of units to reduce the reliance on windows being placed within the flank (car park facing) wall. A copy of that response in full is attached within the bundle.



## 2. Site Context

2.1. The central conservation area includes the whole of the town centre, most of the Victorian, Edwardian and some of the later 20th century suburbs. It covers commercial, industrial, retail and residential areas, as well as the university campus complexes, some extensive school campuses and the hospital complex.

2.2. The site itself is located within The Old Town Character Area. The conservation area appraisal reflects that:

“This Old Town is special because:

- a. Cheltenham’s historic layout and street pattern is displayed;
- b. Much of the ancient High Street is within this area;
- c. This was the only main street in Cheltenham for centuries, indeed, the settlement was known in medieval times as Cheltenham Street;
- d. Traditional burgage plots were developed from either side of the High Street, many of which are traceable today.

The Grade I listed St Mary’s Church is the oldest building in Cheltenham, with Norman origins. It is located in this area and significantly contributes to its character.

The area contains the sites of several notable lost buildings including the Assembly Rooms and the Plough Inn, both formerly on the High Street.

This character area encompasses a variety of architectural styles and ages, which have warranted the listing of many buildings. The architecture contributes significantly to the character and appearance of the area.”

## National Planning Policy Framework

3.1. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework on 24 July 2018. This was the first revision of the National Planning Policy Framework since 2012. It implemented around 85 reforms announced previously through the Housing white paper, the planning for the right homes in the right places consultation and the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework consultation. Following a technical consultation on updates to national planning policy, we have made very minor changes

to the text and published an updated Framework in 2021. The National Planning Policy Framework is a vital tool in ensuring that we get planning for the right homes built in the right places of the right quality at the same time as protecting our environment.

3.2. The current Core Strategy post dates the 2006 relevance date within the NPPF and together with the NPPF provides the most current planning policy for Cheltenham. The relevant sections of the NPPF are set out below:

### **Introduction**

2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

3. The Framework should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes). General references to planning policies in the Framework should be applied in a way that is appropriate to the type of plan being produced, taking into account policy on plan-making in chapter.

### **Achieving sustainable development**

7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection.

8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):



- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

9. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area;
  - or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed;
  - or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

## **Decision Making**

38. Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

## **Determining Application**

47. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

48. Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

\*22 During the transitional period for emerging plans submitted for examination (set out in paragraph 214), consistency should be tested against the previous Framework published in March 2012.

### **Delivering a sufficient supply of homes**

60. To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

61. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

62. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

### **Promoting sustainable transport**

104. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and

e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.

105. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

106. Planning policies should:

- a) support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities;
- b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;
- c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;
- d) provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans);
- e) provide for any large scale transport facilities that need to be located in the area, and the infrastructure and wider development required to support their operation, expansion and contribution to the wider economy. In doing so they should take into account whether such development is likely to be a nationally significant infrastructure project and any relevant national policy statements; and
- f) recognise the importance of maintaining a national network of general aviation airfields, and their need to adapt and change over time – taking into account their economic value in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs, and the Government’s General Aviation Strategy.

107. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development,

policies should take into account:

- a) the accessibility of the development;
- b) the type, mix and use of development;
- c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- d) local car ownership levels; and
- e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

108. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

109. Planning policies and decisions should recognise the importance of providing adequate overnight lorry parking facilities, taking into account any local shortages, to reduce the risk of parking in locations that lack proper facilities or could cause a nuisance. Proposals for new or expanded distribution centres should make provision for sufficient lorry parking to cater for their anticipated use.

### **Making effective use of land**

119. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

120. Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;

- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and
- e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.**

121. Local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them. This should include identifying opportunities to facilitate land assembly, supported where necessary by compulsory purchase powers, where this can help to bring more land forward for meeting development needs and/or secure better development outcomes.

### **Achieving well-designed places**

126. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

127. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.



Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

128. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.

### **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

196. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:  
a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets

- and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

### **Considering potential impacts**

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the

significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

204. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible<sup>69</sup>. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

207. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

208. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but

which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

## **Local Policy**

3.3. The adopted Joint Core Strategy and Local Plan provides the up-to-date local planning policy framework for the borough. The relevant policies to this matter are set out below:

### Adopted Cheltenham Plan 2020 (CP) Policies

D1 Design  
SL1 Safe and Sustainable Living

### Adopted Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Policies

SD3 Sustainable Design and Construction  
SD4 Design Requirements  
SD8 Historic Environment  
SD10 Residential Development  
SD11 Housing Mix and Standards  
SD14 Health and Environmental Quality  
INF1 Transport Network

## **4. Principle of Development**

4.1. Both the Local and National Planning Frameworks offer support for the use of undeveloped land and buildings within existing settlements. There is no overriding policy provision within the Local Plan that presumes against the principle of housing lead development on this site.

4.2. It was recently determined that no prior approval, application ref. 21/01708/P3OPA, would be required for a change of use of the existing building from offices to 2no. dwellings, in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class O of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

4.3. The principle of the conversion of the existing building has therefore been established through the prior approval recently granted.

4.4. The conversion of the building itself into multiple units is considered acceptable in principle and makes best use of the building in accordance with Para 120 of the NPPF.

4.5. The addition of external alterations and a roof to form four further dwellings is considered acceptable in principle in accordance with para 120 of the NPPF. As such the development is acceptable in principle subject to the detailed design and amenity considerations that follow.

## **5. The Design Appraisal**

### **Scale**

5.1. The surrounding area is characterised by two and three storey georgian buildings most of which including further accommodation at Mansard Level. The proposed development would fall within this mix providing a three storey building with the additional accommodation within the roof facilitated by modest window insertions within the road fronting elevations. As such the scale of the proposed development is commensurate with that in the surrounding area.

### **Amount**

5.2. The amount of development is carefully balanced between the delivery of an efficient number of dwellings and the need to alter the building to accommodate those dwellings. As such this balance as shown on the layout plan provides for 7 flats with space for cycle storage and refuse storage within the front forecourt.

5.3. Each dwelling has been designed to comply with the national space standards for single storey development.

### **Layout**

5.4. The layout of the site reflects its position on the road junction and closes the vista from a number of views onto St Georges Place.

### **Landscape**

5.5. The landscape setting of the development is proposed to be simple and hardwearing commensurate with the urban environment of the town centre that often needs the hardiest of

plants and surface materials. The precise landscape scheme is proposed to be deferred to a condition once a full materials specification has been agreed.

## **Heritage Assessment**

6.1. The site is within Cheltenham Central Conservation Area and The Old Town Character Area. The site is also adjacent to a number of Listed Buildings.

6.2. The principal issue at hand is whether the proposed works would have any effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or setting of the Listed Buildings.

6.3. The para 206 of the NPPF makes clear that:

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

6.4. The NPPF does not expressly prohibit alterations to setting of Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas so long as the alteration is reasonable and necessary in order to ensure its continued conservation.

6.5. The key test in this case is set out at para 197 of the NPPF and therefore reflects upon the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

## **The Existing Condition**

6.6. The site is a part single/part two storey former public house that was last used as offices. The Conservation Area appraisal cites St George's Place in the following paragraphs.

3.3 Areas of interest within and adjacent to the character area include a site behind St James' Square, where in the 1990's excavations revealed a large quantity of pottery. This suggested there was considerable Roman settlement in the town during the second and third centuries. Other archaeological remains discovered include a medieval field boundary and trackway on land



adjacent Portland Street and St Margaret's Road; four possible RomanoBritish pits and several post medieval pits with pottery and **tile fragments in St George's Place and Norman ecclesiastical** remains on the site of the old wool and corn market house in the High Street.

5.3 There are a number of buildings in use as offices throughout the character area, for example in St George's Terrace and St George's Square, Bath Street, Crescent Place, North Place, **St George's Place** and Ambrose Street. These bring economic activity and prosperity to the area.

5.24 b. The Crescent Bakery, on St George's Place

5.25 In the late 18th century, a puppet theatre named Sadlers' Wells Theatre was located in **St George's Place**. It was established in 1795 by Samuel Seward of Bristol. The puppet theatre operated for about 30 years. After Seward's death, it was re-opened in 1831 as the New Clarence Theatre. The buildings were demolished in 2006.

5.44 There are very few good-sized private gardens within the area. Properties that do have private gardens of a notable size are located in Chelsea Square in **St George's Place**, Gloucester Place and parts of Albion Street. These open spaces enhance their individual properties, but do little for the public realm due to their concealment, typically behind high walls.

5.46 There are few trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Those that do have TPOs include a row of lime trees along Clarence Street which enhance a terrace; a beech tree on the junction of **St George's Place** and St James' Square which is located in a prominent position; and a silver birch tree by the Friends Meeting House on Warwick Place which also occupies a prominent position and enhances the appearance of this area which is otherwise without trees or vegetation.

## **The Intervention and Development Proposed**

6.7. The appearance of the development takes its reference from adjoining and surrounding development within the wider area with a modest pallet of materials including cream render elevations and an appropriate colour matched tile roof.

6.8. The appearance would otherwise be complementary to the range of building types and materials found within the surrounding area.

6.9. The applicants are more than willing to discuss the final materials palette and any design detail with the LPA during the application.

## **Impact to the Conservation area and Listed Buildings**

6.10. The site is within the Conservation Area and read within the wider mix of buildings in that area which include a number of Listed Buildings. Given these sensitivities the applicants have sought the advice of the Planning Officer prior to making this application. The existing building itself forms, in part, a building of interest in the Conservation Area and great effort has been made to retain the interest features of the building as highlighted in pre-application advice.

6.11. The proposed development would have a positive effect on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings being read within the same context. When compared to the previous development on the site the proposed development would provide an appropriate backdrop to the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings and would provide an appropriate insertion within the area.

6.12. Overall the proposed development would ensure the continued conservation of the existing Listed Building and would not, in itself, prove detrimental to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed buildings and would sustain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As such the development is considered acceptable and planning consent can be granted.

## **7. The Access Appraisal**

7.1. The impact of the development on transport and highways is considered not to be detrimental or harmful due to the proposed development resulting in a lower parking demand than the current office use whilst the parking facilities available to future site users will remain the same as in the current scenario. The property had ad-hoc parking available to the front which is no reallocated to cycle and refuse storage. It is therefore considered that adequate parking space is provided within the vicinity of the site and that the proposed development would not result in any parking that would be detrimental to highway safety.

7.2. Therefore it is highlighted that the proposed change of use will not amount to a substantive impact on the highway network.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1. This application presents an opportunity to bring forward housing lead development on a heritage building within the existing settlement envelope and is therefore acceptable in principle.

8.2. The development would not have an unacceptable appearance within the street or give rise to an unacceptable impact on living conditions.

8.3. The development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

8.4. As such the development is acceptable and we look forward to discussing the matter with the planning authority.