

## Heritage Statement

Project: 1A, 1B, 1C & 1D Market Place and Flat No.1 & Flat No.2 Market Cross Maisonettes,  
Market Place, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1HS

Client: Tom Robson

Date: March 2023

Revision: A



## Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Inhouse Architecture in support of a fully detailed planning application made by Riever Apartments Ltd, for the redevelopment of 1A, 1B, 1C & 1D Market Place and Flat No.1 & Flat No.2 Market Cross Maisonettes, to create two new commercial units, and two serviced accommodation apartments.

This document explains the overall context and vision for the redevelopment whilst also providing the justification for the proposals. This document should be read in conjunction with the full suite of existing and proposed drawings submitted as part of the application as well as the accompanying statements.

## Listing Details

List Entry Number: 1041459

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> August 1977

List Entry Name: Easycare Centre

Statutory Address: Easycare Centre, Market Place

Grade: II

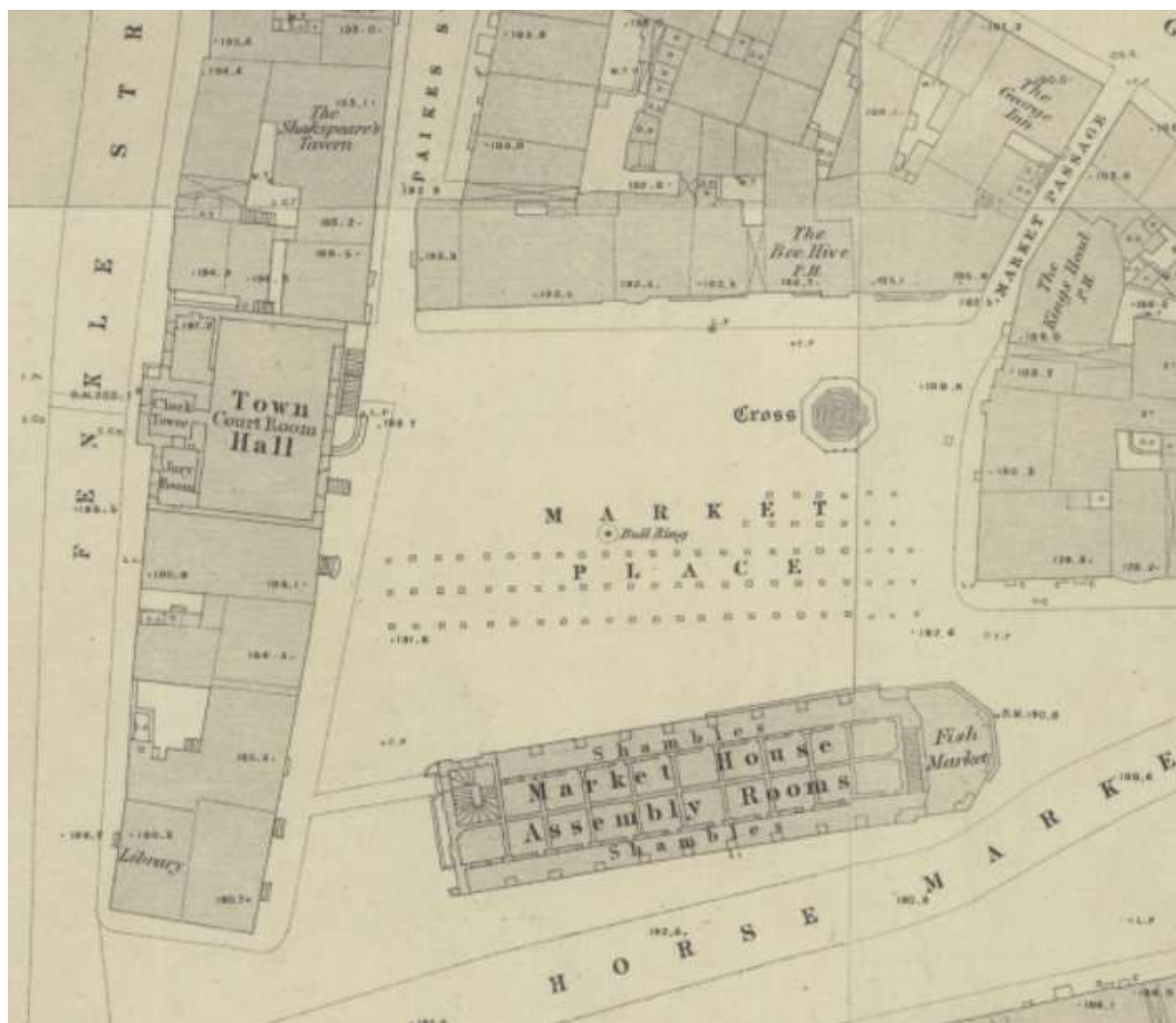
Details: MARKET PLACE 1. 5330 (North Side) Easycare Centre NU 1813 SE 1/299 II GV C18. Three storeys and 4 windows. Rendered front. Slate roof with one chimney to left. Snail casement windows under eaves on 2nd floor. Glazing bar sash windows on 1st floor. Late C19 shop front on ground floor, end bays slightly bowed, framed by pilasters; 3 doors in centre, also framed by pilasters, central one to through passage, and a common fascia overall with band and reel cornice.

Listing NGR: NU1864113325

## Location and Description

The site is located in Alnwick's prominent and historic medieval market square. Alnwick is situated almost equidistant between Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Berwick-upon-Tweed, serving as a welcome rest for travellers along this main Northumberland thoroughfare. Alnwick continues to be a thriving market town today, with twice-weekly markets, as well as more specialist events taking place in the designated square. The market square is populated by the town hall with numerous shops and cafes.

In this area, local sandstone and lime render is common, with some small sections of red brick features to the gables and chimneys. Welsh slate tiles are the dominant roof covering although the existing FF commercial unit has a mix of both welsh slate and red clay plain tiles to the roof. The main elevations contain a mix of repeating fenestration, with white painted timber sliding sash windows and painted shop fronts.



OS Map - 1864

The proposed site consists of two buildings. The building on the left is an early Victorian two-storey building, containing three ground floor commercial units and one first floor commercial unit. Currently, two of the ground floor units are occupied, while the central unit is vacant. The use of the first floor commercial unit is unknown; however, the previous use was likely a department store. While the exterior of the first floor unit looks in relatively good condition, internally, the current condition is extremely poor with years of neglect taking its toll on both the structure and internal finishes. There is significant damage to the existing ceilings, walls and floors, with many existing internal features also damaged. The exterior appearance of the building consists of stone walls with two feature gables with timber painted Victorian shop

fronts. The first floor has a projecting timber bay window, complete with 3 timber sliding sash windows with glazing bars and a pitched lead roof.



Non Listed Building.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century three storey building on the right is Grade II listed, containing one commercial unit on the ground floor and two 1 bedroom apartments, both spanning the first and second floors. Currently the ground floor commercial unit and 1 bedroom apartments are both vacant. The exterior appearance differs from the building to the left as the external walls to the first and second floor are faced in a lime render with repeating fenestration. Larger white painted timber sliding sash windows to the first floor, with smaller casement windows to the second floor. The ground floor commercial unit has a late 19<sup>th</sup> century Shop front, painted white with red painted timber doors and white painted timber fixed glazed windows. The roof covering also differs from the building to the left, with slate tiles, clay ridge tiles and black cast iron rainwater goods, finished with a single red brick chimney stack. The exterior of the listed building is in a relatively good condition with minor repairs required, however, just like the interior to the building on the left, there was significant internal damage due to years of neglect and lack of regular maintenance. Leaks to the roof have caused extensive damage to second floor structural timbers, ceilings and windows. Damage is also present to existing timber studwork and internal finishes, with damaged timber floors on both the first and second floors. Significant damage to the floor includes sloping floors due to rotten joists with large holes caused by water damage within the existing bathrooms. Access to the 1 bedroom

apartments is via an alley way between the commercial unit and café but this land is not owned by the client.



## Proposal & Impact on Asset

The project is a proposal for the renovation and conversion of both the ground floor and first floor commercial units and the apartments. The existing ground floor unit of the listed building is to be split in to two separate smaller commercial units. The exact use of these commercial units is unknown at this time. The original shop front has three doorways which we intend to reintroduce, which would allow us to provide a new central access to the first floor apartments. The previous owner of the first floor apartments had previously relinquished the access to the rear stepped access to the first floor, shown on the existing plan and elevations. This issue has required us to re-introduce the original central doorway, creating a new staircase to the proposed FF apartments. This new staircase lands on the first floor where the existing party wall between the two FF apartments is situated. This requires the first floor and second floor plans to be updated accordingly to suit the new access. It is likely that over the years, the listed building has been altered significantly from the original design. A photo from 1890 shows a clearly altered shop front from the current.



Alnwick Market Place ca. 1890

The proposals would look to simplify the current floor plans, amending the many differing floor levels at first floor level. The two domestic units would then be opened up to create one large two bed luxury serviced accommodation unit, covering both the first and second floors.

Adding the new stair access would split the existing ground floor commercial unit into two smaller units. Both units would be upgraded to a more modern standard with a small kitchenette, storage room and a WC. The exterior shop fronts would be repaired and repainted with a breathable mineral paint suitable for external timber.

It is entirely feasible that at some point in the buildings history, the central doorway led to a staircase up to the first and second floors – allowing the two ground floor shops to operate independently.

The proposals also include the change of use of ground floor units 1A, 1B & 1C and the first floor commercial unit to a larger Café/ Restaurant which spans both floors. Access to the first floor will be maintained from unit 1A with an additional stair also added. Historic uses of the units include a department store which also spanned both floors. Like the listed building, its likely that the uses of these building have been amended and changed multiple times over the lifespan of the buildings.

For the proposals to work effectively, access to the two serviced accommodation apartments is required through the proposed central door of the listed building. As access is no longer available to the rear and access is not suitable through the hairdressers, the floor plan of the listed building needs to be amended to suit.

## Upgrades

To meet the current guidelines for change of use, set out in Part L of the building regulations, we are proposing to insulate both the walls and the roof with natural and breathable insulation.

Firstly, any cement mortar will be carefully removed from the existing stonework and replaced with lime mortar to match the existing. A breathable waterproofing cream (BKK Eco) will then be painted on to the external stonework and lime render to prevent water penetration which could potentially cause damage to the stonework and the new insulation being installed on the inner side of the wall. Internally, a new 10mm NHL 3.5 parge coat will be added to level out the existing stonework, providing the primary airtightness layer, whilst maintaining the breathability and moisture control properties of the wall and proposed insulation. A 50mm timber frame structure will be constructed, with breathable woodfibre insulation used to infill the studwork. The woodfibre insulation also has a better thermal mass than more modern insulation types, meaning it will retain more heat for longer periods of time, creating a more comfortable environment. An intelligent, self-healing vapour control layer will be installed on the inner face of the studwork to preventing the passage of warm, moist air into the wall fabric. This fully breathable build up will also help prevent the build-up of interstitial condensation, with any moisture built up between the insulation and stonework eventually escaping.

The roof will be upgraded with a similar natural and breathable approach. The existing slates will be removed and stored carefully, to allow for a new breathable roof membrane to be installed. This new breathable membrane will provide protection to the existing rafters by repelling any water into the existing gutters. The membrane will also allow any moisture build up in the roof structure to escape. The same breathable woodfibre insulation will be installed between the existing rafters with the same intelligent vapour control layer fixed to the underside. The vapour control layer will be taped and sealed to the wall VCL, completely protecting the fabric of the building.

By using the above specifications, we will limit any damage to the existing listed structure by allowing the wall and roof build ups to breathe. Allowing the structure to breathe will limit the damage caused by freeze thaw and rotting timber elements. The high quality materials will help prevent any unwanted build-up of moisture, damp and mould, whilst still providing a suitable level of insulation and comfort.

All the windows to the listed building will be repaired and repainted in a suitable breathable white paint. Internal secondary glazing will also be provided. New hardwood timber sliding sash windows will be provided to the non-listed building due to the current damage to the existing windows.

## Conclusion

Both buildings require significant repair, as years of neglect and lack of maintenance have aided in the significant deterioration of the building's fabric. Many of the elements of the proposed works shall provide enhancement to the commercial units and accommodation,

improving the existing fabric with high quality materials, whilst respecting the historic nature and character.

The listing entry describes the external architectural features of merit which are integral to the Grade II listed status. No changes are proposed to the external envelope of the building, so there will be no visual impact to the listed building or conservation area. Localised areas of patch repair will be required to bring the buildings back up to a suitable standard.

The interior of the listing is in a very bad state of repair, with any existing internal features either significantly damaged or completely missing. The proposals therefore are concerned with the long-term conservation of the building, securing its valuable addition to the heritage value of the town centre. By renovating the internal structure, and sensitively upgrading and repairing the external envelope without affecting its appearance, the future of the building can be secured.

The proposed central staircase, which is likely to be original, will enter the FF where the central wall currently sits. It is highly likely that the existing building has changed use on multiple occasions over the years, with the central stair removed when the FF was split into two dwellings. As access from the front of the building is imperative, internal alterations will be required.

The proposals will not only increase and promote local businesses but also tourism in the heart of Alnwick and the prominent Market Place. It is hoped that these proposals will positively enhance the Market Place and architectural quality in the town, and we hope that the application is viewed favourably by the council.