

Design & Access Statement

Proposal: Application for conversion of existing dwelling from 3no flats to form a new 3-storey family home and other alterations including removal of rear extension, erection of rear balcony, replacement of existing uPVC windows, boundary wall treatments, other associated renovation works and landscaping

Location: 2 Percy Gardens, Tynemouth, North Tyneside



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Acre Design to support an application for the conversion of an existing dwelling from three flats to form a 3-storey family home and other alterations including removal of rear extension, erection of rear balcony, replacement of existing uPVC windows, boundary wall treatments, and other associated renovation works and landscaping at No. 2 Percy Gardens, Tynemouth. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and photoset / submissions.
- 1.2. Percy Gardens is a grand Victorian crescent of townhouses located on the sea front in Tynemouth and benefits from outstanding views of the sea, the North Pier and Tynemouth Priory. Percy Gardens comprises a large, curved terrace of 2 and 3 story buildings with a private road and a large oval shaped communal garden area to the front of the buildings. It is a prominent terrace that lies in the heart of the Tynemouth Village Conservation Area.



- 1.3. No. 2 Percy Gardens is located near the southern tip of Percy Gardens (**See Location Plan**) and is not listed. The property is a townhouse that has been subdivided into three flats over three floors (two on the ground floor, and one on each of the first and second floors) with a small extension and garden to the rear. Many of the properties along Percy Gardens have also been subdivided into flats however there are still some complete houses.

- 1.4. Having been subdivided and rented out over the last few years, the property has become somewhat tired and dated with declining internal and external condition. This planning application therefore seeks to make a number of improvements to the property to restore and enhance its original character as an entire townhouse and make a positive contribution to the Tynemouth Village Conservation Area.



Photos: Acre Design Ltd

Internally the property is dated and tired, requiring considerable renovation.

There are many original features which will all be retained (including the original window panelling above left) and many unsympathetic alterations which were undertaken as part of the subdivision into flats such as the above partition wall to create a narrow corridor and the box doorway (left)

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1. This proposal seeks planning permission to convert No. 2 Percy Gardens from three/four flats back into a five-bedroom townhouse along with other alterations as part of a significant renovation project to restore and enhance the original character and grandeur of the building.
- 2.2. The proposal will include the demolition of the rear extension, which is a later addition; erection of a new rear balcony; alterations to rear window openings; replacement of all existing uPVC windows; replacement of existing rear roof with slate tiles; re-painting the front elevation of the property; replacing the front boundary wall with wrought iron fencing; removing the non-original outbuilding to the rear and erecting a greenhouse and creating a larger streetside entranceway to the garage.
- 2.3. The house itself will comprise an open plan kitchen / living room, reception room and dining room on the ground floor along with a utility and pantry in the former outbuilding annex to the rear **(See Proposed GF Plan)**. On the first floor is the master bedroom (with dressing room and ensuite), along with an additional bedroom, reception room and office **(See Proposed 1F Plan)**. The second floor has a further three bedrooms (two ensuite), a hobby room and a storage room **(See Proposed 2F Plan)**.
- 2.4. The flat roofed extension to the rear of the house – currently containing the kitchen and bathroom for one of the ground floor flats - will be removed back to the original one-and-a-half storey porch (which has a 'half landing' area with storage cupboard above) **(See Historic Title Deed Plan Below)**. The existing door on the southern elevation of the ground floor 'porch' will be blocked up (sympathetically in matching red brick) and a new rear doorway (with new uPVC door) will be created on the western elevation leading directly onto an outdoor patio area.
- 2.5. The 'half landing' (which is located above the porch) will provide access to a new outdoor balcony. The existing full height window on the landing will be replaced with a new glass door with a fan light (in a matching finish to the windows) and will lead directly onto the new black wrought iron framed balcony with a metal railing balustrade **(See 3D Proposed Rear)**.

- 2.6. The rear facing window in the new kitchen (previously a bedroom in one of the ground floor flats) will be reduced in size slightly to sit above the height of the kitchen worktop. In addition, the door on the first floor (directly above the kitchen, accessed by the fire escape) will be partially blocked and replaced with a window and the adjoining window will be blocked up completely (**See Proposed Rear Elevation and existing photo of the rear elevation overleaf**). The fire escape will also be removed.
- 2.7. All windows on the property (except for skylights on the rear roof) will be replaced with new heritage uPVC sliding sash windows in an off white finish. The existing windows are white top hung uPVC casement windows which are not reflective of the historic character of the building. The replacement sash and case windows (with the exception of the small rear window adjacent to the 'half landing' door – **See Proposed Rear Elevation**) will have a single vertical astragal bar and overall enhance the aesthetic of the property.
- 2.8. The rear pan tiles roof will be replaced with slate tiles consistent with the front of the property. In addition, the front elevation of the building will be re-painted in an off-white colour. Whilst the exact shade is to be determined, it is a muted shade in keeping with the palette of the other properties along the terrace.
- 2.9. The existing front boundary wall will be removed down to the existing stone plinth and new ornate railings will be installed on top to reflect the historic character of the building and its surroundings (**See photo of the property c.1911 below**). The same railings will also be installed adjacent to the entrance steps, the front door will be refurbished, and the house number will be added to the front door fan light (**See 3D Proposed Front**).



Historic photo of Percy Gardens including No. 2 from c. 1911

2.10. There is an outbuilding adjoining the rear of the property (which has a couple of small extensions on the far end of it – partially evident in left of Photo), part of which has already been converted to form a kitchen and bathroom for one of the ground floor flats (**See Existing GF Plan and 3D Existing Rear**). The original outbuilding will be retained as is with part of it forming the new utility and pantry and the remainder will remain an externally accessed outbuilding. The two small extensions to the original outbuilding will be removed, and a new greenhouse situated in their place.



2.11. Finally, the garage at the rear of the property (which provides direct access onto ‘The Mews’) will be retained as is with the addition of a new wider garage door.

2.12. Overall, these alterations have been carefully designed to not only create a spacious and comfortable dwellinghouse, but to improve and enhance the exceptional character of this building which – as part of Percy Gardens – will make a valuable contribution to the Tynemouth Village Conservation Area.

3. POLICY ANALYSIS

- 3.1. All applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, the “National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions” (National Planning Policy Framework 2023).
- 3.2. As such, this proposal must ensure compliance with all relevant national and local level planning policy and guidance.


National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 3.3. Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the core principles for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It states that:
“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.” (Para. 197)
- 3.4. This proposal seeks to make a number of alterations to an existing (non-listed) building within a conservation area. The alterations will result in a considerable improvement to both the internal and external fabric of the building, which will make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness as well as the wider conservation area. Therefore, the proposal complies with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

North Tyneside Local Plan (2017)

- 3.5. Of specific relevance to this proposal is Policy DM6.6 (Chapter 9: The Built and Historic Environment) of the North Tyneside Local Plan which states that:

“Proposals that affect heritage assets or their settings, will be permitted where they sustain, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance, appearance,



character and setting of heritage assets in an appropriate manner. As appropriate, development will:


- a. Conserve built fabric and architectural detailing that contributes to the heritage asset's significance and character;
- b. Repair damaged features or reinstate missing features and architectural detailing that contribute to the heritage asset's significance;
- c. Conserve and enhance the spaces between and around buildings including gardens, boundaries, driveways and footpaths;
- d. Remove additions or modifications that are considered harmful to the significance of the heritage asset;
- e. Ensure that additions to heritage assets and within its setting do not harm the significance of the heritage asset;"

North Tyneside Local Plan 2017, Policy DM6.6

- 3.6. The alterations proposed within this planning application aim to not only conserve but further enhance the built fabric and character of No. 2 Percy Gardens. Every effort has been made to ensure the alterations have been designed to reflect the traditional Victorian architecture of the property and will result in it being much more closely aligned with its heritage than currently.
- 3.7. The proposal includes the reinstatement of the building to a single dwellinghouse which will retain, recover and enhance many original features as well as removing unsympathetic alterations made as part of the subdivision into flats. The replacement of the existing uPVC casement windows with more appropriate heritage uPVC sash and case windows, new railings at the front (which is evident in other parts of the conservation area), sensitively re-painting the front elevation, replacing the rear roofs pan tiles with slate, and removing the rear flat roofed extension will all significantly improve the visual appearance and overall character of the property.
- 3.8. Collectively, the alterations to the property will reinstate it as an attractive Victorian townhouse that is in keeping with its surroundings. The alterations will significantly improve the condition and visual appearance of the property in a sympathetic way and will not adversely affect the conservation area in any way. Therefore it is considered to meet the requirements set out in DM6.6

Tynemouth Village Conservation Area Management Strategy

- 3.9. In addition to the above, of particular importance and relevance to this application is the Tynemouth Village Conservation Area Management Strategy (2014). The Strategy is an adopted Supplementary Planning Document and *'provides further detail and guidance on how to apply existing planning policies... and has considerable weight in planning processes'* (Page 7).
- 3.10. It sets out design principles for proposals within the conservation area (Page 35) and states that:
- 3.11. *'All alterations, extensions or new developments in the Conservation Area should have the highest respect for the existing character of Tynemouth Village. They should be in proportion to surrounding buildings and spaces in terms of size and scale, and use high quality materials'*. (Page 35)
- 3.12. As stated above, every effort has been made to ensure that this proposal not only retains the existing character of No. 2 Percy Gardens, but also significantly enhances it. Internally, every effort will be made to retain and recover the original features that are such an important part of the original character and grandeur of the building. Many of the alterations made as part of the subdivision into flats including the flat roofed extension to the rear will be removed to mirror the original style and proportions of the building more closely. The alterations proposed are all proportionate and appropriate in terms of scale and use of materials and overall will have a positive impact on the surrounding conservation area.
- 3.13. The design principles also include that:
- 'Windows and doors should match the character and period of the building in both fenestration and materials. The preservation, and where appropriate the restoration, of original windows and doors in all properties is of paramount importance. Where inappropriate modern windows and doors are being replaced, the new replacements must be in the vernacular of the age of the building. Fenestration is a key element in maintaining the character of the Conservation Area. In the Village core and terraces, sliding sash windows should be retained at all costs, and restored wherever they have been changed from this. uPVC is generally unacceptable in properties of the age and style we have in this conservation area'*. (Page 35)

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- 3.14. Further to this, the Strategy refers to the Tynemouth Village Conservation Area, Article 4(2) Direction: Window Guidance Note which states *‘The most important priorities for windows are those set out in the Council’s Windows Guidance for the conservation area’s existing Article 4 Direction’* which includes that *‘existing unsuitable replacement timber or PVCu windows should be replaced with good quality replicas to the original design’* (Page 31).
- 3.15. Whilst the original windows on No. 2 Percy Gardens were timber sash and case, these were replaced many years ago with top hung uPVC casement windows which are not in keeping or sympathetic to the vernacular character of the building. It is therefore proposed that all of these will be replaced with heritage uPVC sliding sash windows in a chalk white finish. The new windows are much more in keeping with the character of the building and will be a significant improvement from the existing windows as well as being an almost exact replica of the originals. It is considered that the replacement windows would comply with the above insofar as they provide a high-quality replica of the original design and overall will result in a significant and sympathetic improvement to the visual appearance of the property.
- 3.16. The design principles also include that:
- ‘Roofs on terraced houses here are traditional natural slate (usually Welsh) and should continue to be so. Roofs on inter-war houses should be tiled in the vernacular. The use of natural materials is essential, and the recycling of materials is very much encouraged’.* (Page 35)
- 3.17. This proposal includes the replacement of the rear roofs pan tiles with slate. This is supported by the above and will realign another element of the vernacular character of the property.



4. ACCESS

- 4.1. No. 2 Percy Gardens is currently divided into three flats accessed via the front door of the building and the upper floors sharing the main staircase. There are two existing ground floor rear entrances (from the two ground floor flats) into the back garden as well as a rear door on the first floor accessed via the fire escape.
- 4.2. Whilst this proposal seeks to consolidate the individual flats to create a single building, access to the property will remain largely as is currently. There is a main front facing entrance accessible from Percy Gardens and there will be two rear doors out into the back garden via the porch and utility.
- 4.3. At the rear of the garden is the garage which has access directly onto 'The Mews' lane to the rear of the property and there is also a pedestrian gate from the garden out onto the lane.
- 4.4. Existing car parking arrangements will remain whereby parking for the property is provided within the garage to the rear.
- 4.5. Existing arrangements for storage of refuse and recycling will remain. Bins are currently stored at the rear of the property and put in the back lane for collection.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. This proposal seeks to undertake a substantial renovation to convert a three-storey townhouse - which is currently subdivided into flats – back into an attractive, comfortable and energy efficient home whilst retaining the existing form and character of the building. The alterations have been sensitively designed to reflect the vernacular style and character of the building whilst reinstating and preserving many of its original features. This proposal will make a positive contribution to Percy Gardens and the Tynemouth Village Conservation Area. As such, the proposal meets the policy requirements in respect of Conservation Areas set out in the relevant planning policy and guidance and therefore should be supported.



Sources:

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Tynemouth Local Plan (2017)

Tynemouth Village Conservation Area Management Strategy

Guidance for windows in North Tyneside's Conservation Areas

Tynemouth Village Window Guidance note

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