

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

1 MAIDEN LANE, STAMFORD – Office to residential conversion with alterations to the principal elevation



Prepared by Harris McCormack Architects

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	PAGE 3
2. Site and surroundings	PAGE 4-5
3. Flood risk map	PAGE 6
4. Policy	PAGE 7-9
5. Huntingdon Conservation Area & Heritage Impact	PAGE 10-12
6. Proposal, Impact and Justification	PAGE 13-15
7. Design & Access	PAGE 16

1 INTRODUCTION

This document is submitted in support of a Full Planning Application for the conversion of a vacant office and shop building into two residential dwellings.

In summary, the works are to include;

- Change of use from Class E to Class C3
- External and internal alterations to accommodate two residential dwellings

Harris McCormack Architects is an award-winning RIBA chartered practice based at ArchHaus in Wansford, with a focus on high quality, design-led, innovative architecture both in traditional and contemporary projects nationwide. Many of the projects involve listed properties or sensitive situations that require a greater level of understanding of the built environment which informs the proposals.

This document demonstrates the process undertaken to develop a brief for the above site. It shows that, along with the Applicant, we have assessed the site's full context, including physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies. It demonstrates that a scheme has emerged from a rigorous assessment-involvement-evaluation-design process that can be taken forward to a successful and appropriate design proposal.

The key objective of this document is to identify and minimise any potential impact on the Conservation Area and demonstrate the application is in line with national and local planning policy.

This document accompanies a full set of drawings for the Full Planning application, seeking approval from Huntingdonshire District Council.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

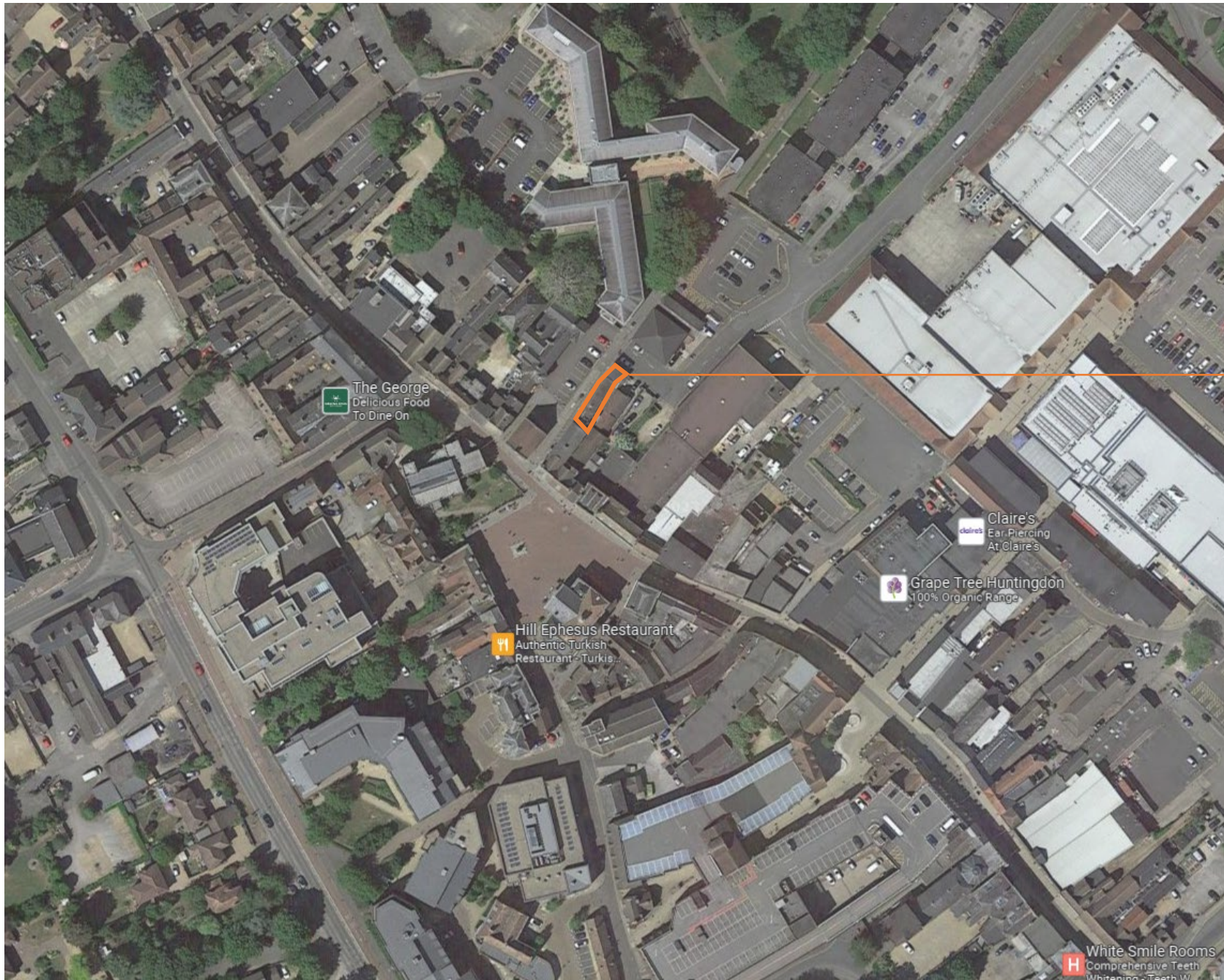
Huntingdon is a market town (population 23,732) sited directly between Peterborough and Cambridge, located in the Huntingdonshire County of which it was originally the county town. The town is bounded by the River Great Ouse at the South, which runs from Bedford, through Huntingdon and up to Norfolk. Huntingdon is a large town which is surrounded by a series of villages, namely Godmanchester to the south, Brampton to the west and Hartford to the east.

The application site sits just off Huntingdon's High Street, on Grammar School Walk, which is a pedestrian-heavy street lined with a variety of shops. The path to the subject dwelling is encapsulated by the Grade II* Cromwell Museum – Grammar School Walk opens up on to Market Square, which is surrounded by a series of listed buildings; All Saints Church (Grade I), Town Hall (Grade II*), Walden House (Grade II*) amongst other Grade II Listed Buildings.

Huntingdon has a vast history, hence the plethora of Listed Buildings, and was first mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 921. The town prospered as a market town during the 18th and 19th century, largely due to its locality to the River Great Ouse and thriving Huntingdon Castle, of which the only remains nowadays are archaeological.



Images 1-3: All Saints Church, Cromwell Museum, Town Hall (From Left to Right)



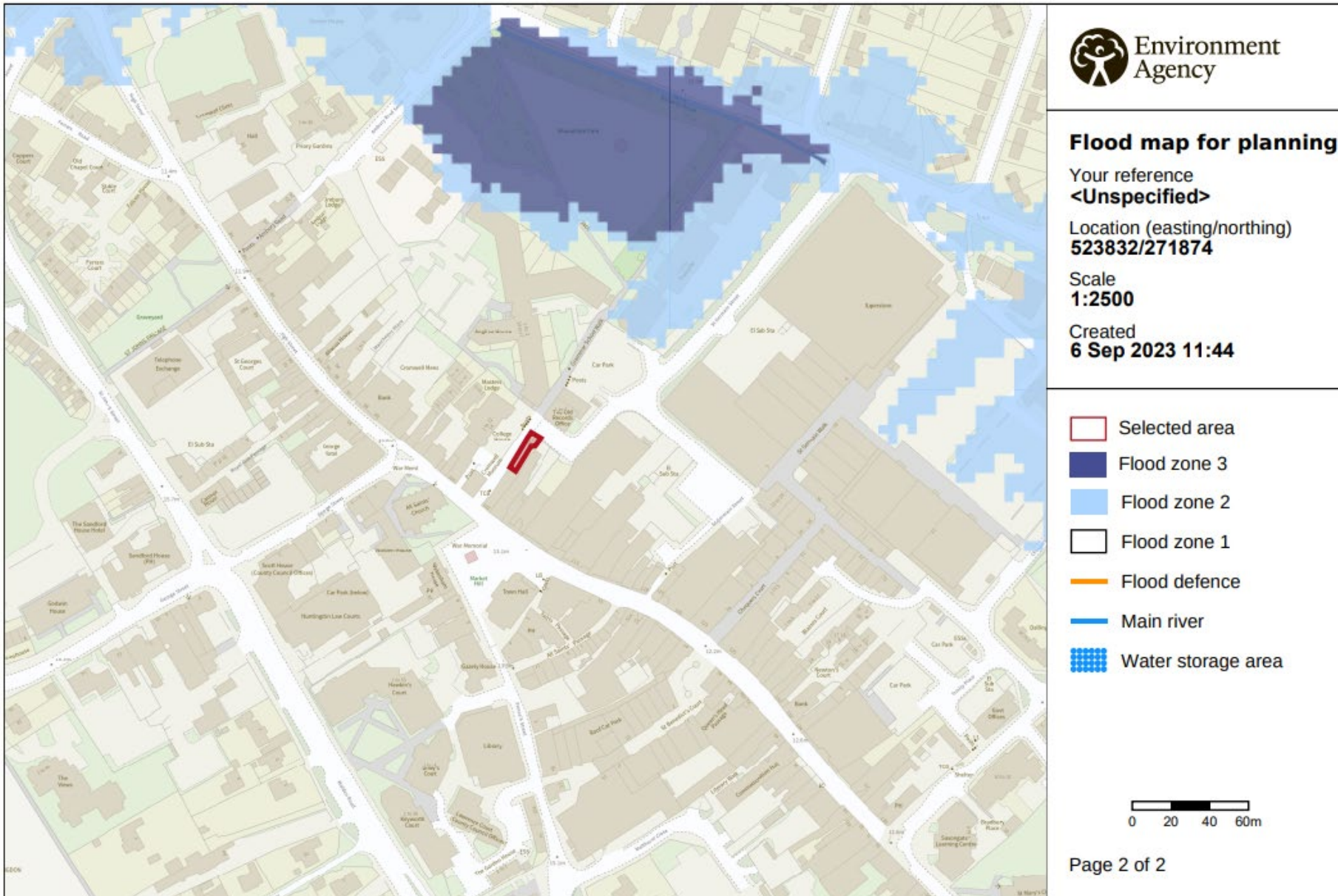
NORTH

107C

Image 4 Aerial image taken from Google Maps

3 FLOOD RISK MAP

The site is at no risk of flooding as defined by the EA



National Planning Policy Framework

124. *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. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan

LP16 Sustainable Travel

New development will be expected to contribute to an enhanced transport network that supports an increasing proportion of journeys being undertaken by sustainable travel modes, defined in the 'Glossary'. A proposal will therefore be supported where it is demonstrated that:

- opportunities are maximised for the use of sustainable travel modes;
- its likely transport impacts have been assessed, and appropriate mitigation measures will be delivered, in accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance;
- safe physical access from the public highway can be achieved, including the rights of way network where appropriate
- any potential impacts on the strategic road network have been addressed in line with Department for Transport Circular 02/2013 and advice from early engagements with Highways England;
- and, there are no severe residual cumulative impacts

It is considered that the proposal of two new dwellings preserves the opportunities for sustainable, public travel modes due to its vicinity to the town centre and hence public travel routes.

LP34 Conservation Areas

A proposal within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents. A proposal should:

- minimise negative impact on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape through retention of buildings/ groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and land form;
- retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, scale, massing, form, materials and plot widths of the existing built environment;
- as well as retaining architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- and where relevant and practical, remove features that are incompatible with or detract significantly from the conservation area.

It is considered that the proposal has a neutral effect on the conservation area, hence not impacting it in a negative way due to the minimal nature of the external proposals.

Huntingdon Local Plan

TC4 Town Centre Car Parking and Access

The loss of public car and motorcycle parking spaces serving Huntingdon town centre will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the loss of any such spaces would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre as a retail, service and visitor destination. Development proposals will be supported where they maximise the potential for cycling and walking linkages to and within the town centre.

It is considered that, although on a small scale, the proposal for a change of use maximises the potential for cycling and walking linkages.

BE3 Heritage Assets

Development proposals should take account of the distinctive character and setting of the Huntingdon Conservation Area and Hartford Conservation Area, including residential areas, open spaces and natural features and reflect this in their layout, design, form, scale, mass, use of materials and detailing.

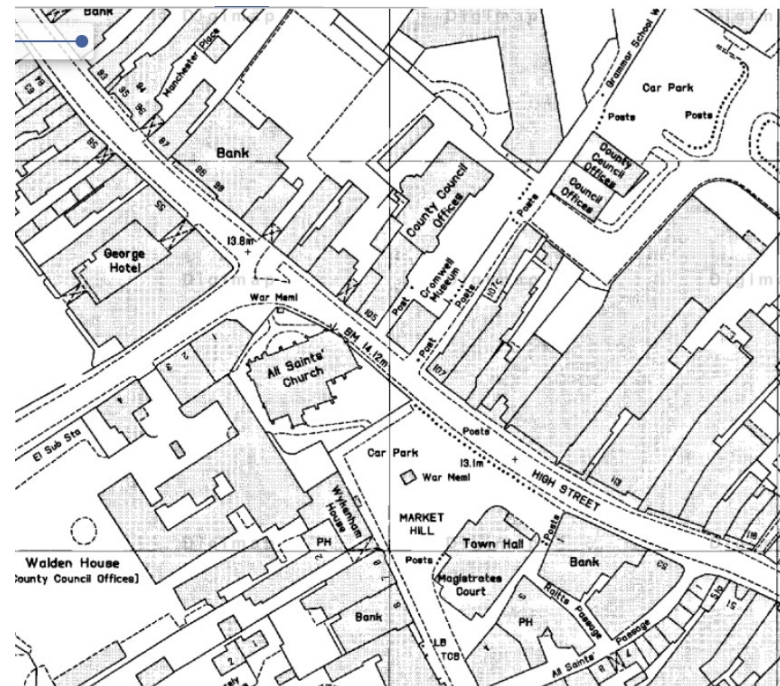
It is considered that the proposal has a neutral effect on the conservation area, hence not impacting it in a negative way due to the minimal nature of the external proposals.

Huntingdon Conservation Area

The information below has been sourced from the *Huntingdonshire Character Assessment*.

Huntingdon's urban growth followed a slow, traditional path from the Middle Ages until just after World War II. However, after 1950, there was a shift with peripheral housing and industrial estates departing from this pattern. Therefore, the character analysis for Huntingdon largely focuses on the pre-1950 settlement morphology – **the comparison maps below shows that our subject building was post-1950 and hence is not key to the conservation area.**

Huntingdon is an ancient borough with a history of self-governance since 1205. It was established as a conservation area in 1972, expanded it in 1991, and now has one for both Huntingdon and Hinchingsbrooke. The town is home to seven Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 122 National List buildings, including four Grade 1 structures.



Images 5&6 Historic maps from 1920 & 1980 respectively

Our subject building sits within subdivision 1.1, which is The Medieval Settlement and hence the oldest area of the town. There are a series of listed buildings along the High Street, of which our modern subject building is attached to one of but is **not** part of the listing. The subject building is defined as a Late 20th Century Civic Building within the Character Assessment, which states these are buildings of:

- **Mass produced buff and red brick** are the most common facing materials, with large areas of glazing also a feature
- **Flat roofs** were a feature of 1960-70s civic buildings, and low-pitched roofs on later examples. Brown or slate grey concrete roof tiles are typical roof coverings
- Generally, rather shallow detailing with minimum set backs at door and window reveals, creating rather **flat, poorly modulated facades**

The points in bold above encapsulate our subject building and hence prove it's un-suitability to the conservation area, which is clearly already at odds with the Medieval Settlement area in terms of aesthetic and form.

Listed Buildings

There are a series of listed buildings situated closely to the subject building of which it is clear that our proposals have no adverse effect on these. As stated earlier, the three most important heritage assets to our proposal are All Saint's Church, Cromwell Museum and 107 High St - listing descriptions as below:

898/2/1 MARKET HILL 10-JAN-51 CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS – Grade I

I A C12 or earlier church that has been wholly rebuilt. The S tower arch is C13, and the tower itself is late C14. The rest of the church was rebuilt in the late C15 and early C16. The tower was repaired in brick probably in the C17. By the late C18 it had galleries, but these were removed during the restoration in 1859 to designs by George Gilbert Scott. The NE organ chamber and vestry were also added at this time. There was extensive restoration in the 1950s by Harold Doe. The base of the tower was converted to a kitchen in 1990. *Cont...*

Huntingdon HIGH STREET 1. 5140 (North-East Side) ----- Cromwell Museum (formerly listed as Grammar School) TL 2371 2/17 10.1.51. II* GV

2. Circa 1170-90, but very restored 1854-6 by Dion Boucicault. Originally the west end of the infirmary hall of the Hospital of St John, 2 bays of nave and aisles. Round piers and arches with some decoration. Street wall has portal and 5 arches above. Bellcote. Was the Grammar School and sometime attended by Cromwell and Pepys. (RCHM 12).

Listing NGR: TL2380671856

Huntingdon HIGH STREET 1. 5140 (North-East Side) ----- No 107 TL 2371 2/17A II GV – Grade II

2. Late C18, altered mid C19. Cement front. 2 storeys and attic, 2 sashes over modern shopfront. Eaves cornice, modern tile roof with one gabled dormer. Early C19 rear wing. Painted brick. 3 storeys, 4 windows, sashes with glazing bars. Slate roof. Included for group value.

Listing NGR: TL2382171857

Ultimately, it is clear that our proposals do not have a negative effect on the conservation area or the listed buildings as above due to it's limited external alterations to a building that is already at odds with the conservation area character assessment.

This is also in part to, particularly for All Saint's Church and Cromwell Museum, it's vicinity away from High Street. Hence, the front elevation alterations do not negatively affect any street scene that the two listed buildings sit within and hence do not affect their setting.

*It is important to note that, although our subject dwelling is connected to the listed 107 High St via a modern lean to, it is **not** part of the listing and isn't mentioned within the listing description.*

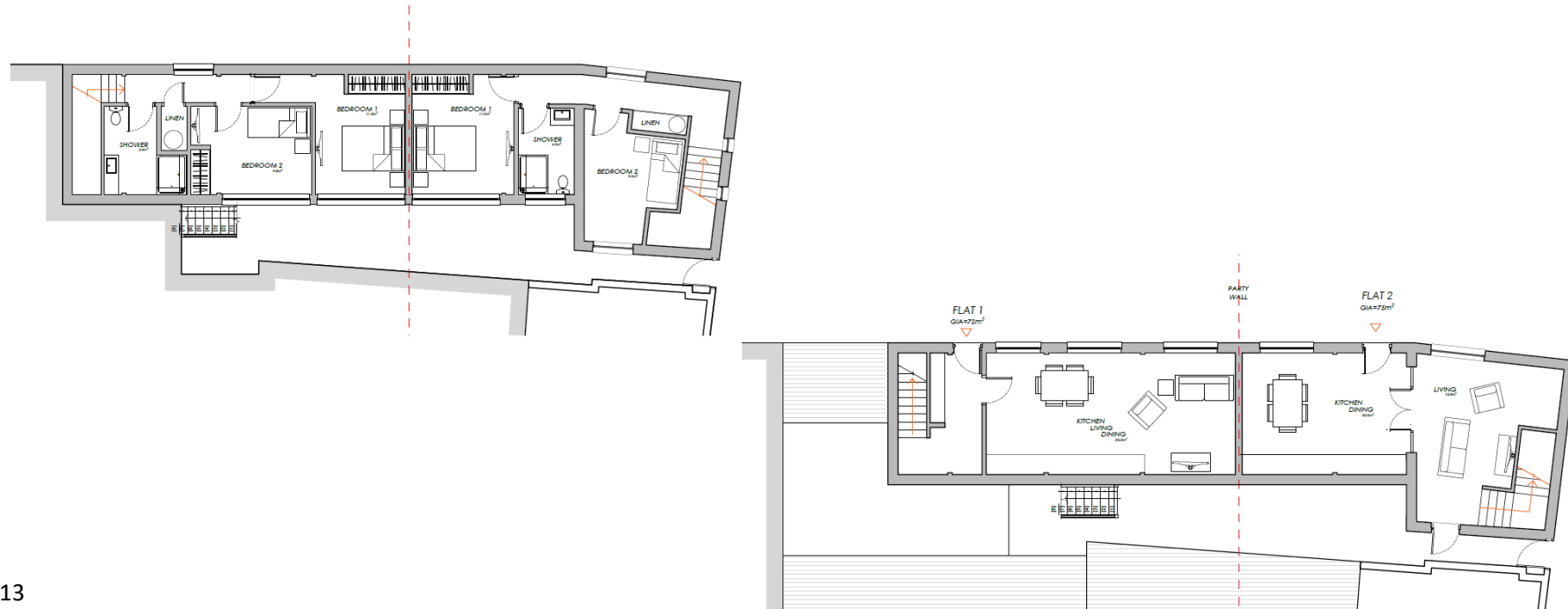
6 PROPOSAL, IMPACT & JUSTIFICATION

This application is for the change of use of 107C High St from Class E to Class C3 and seeks approval for the required internal and external alterations to accommodate two flats.

Proposal

The alterations to the façade are required to facilitate the change of use to two apartment dwellings. On the street facing elevation, they include the addition of a ground floor window and front door, along with moving the original entrance over and adding a new first floor window to balance the façade and allow more light into the first-floor rooms. The ground floor windows will also be replaced, allowing us to shorten their apertures to restrict views into the ground floor. The rear elevations the addition of a new escape door and two first floor windows, one of which sits within the existing aperture of the fire escape door (which is no longer required).

The layout proposed to keep the stairs in situ – the open plan layout currently leans itself to a simple conversion. Due to the concrete structure, the additions will simply be new, removable stud walls to form the apartments as per the layouts below:



Impact & Justification

It is clear that the conversion of Class E to Class C3 be solely done under Class MA GPDO – however, within this application we are wanting to make external alterations as described above. Ultimately, these alterations are justified in terms of their requirement to facilitate a well-designed dwelling layout particularly in terms of natural light and entranceways. The proposals have been assessed against the conservation area and local listed dwellings and they have a neutral impact on both – ultimately, the front elevation is only momentarily visible from the street scene and the additional window and door will be negligible visually and this is also why they have no affect on the listed buildings described above.

The property has been vacant since 01.06.2023, before this it was used as offices for Mencap. This is down to the change in work culture and less people working in an office, leaving it suitable to convert these into residential buildings. Therefore, converting the property to a residential dwelling will mean that the building will be occupied again, and hence maintained, reducing the number of vacant buildings within the town centre.

The conversion provides a more sustainable way of living for the occupant due to close links to public transport, shops, and pubs/restaurants.

The proposals meets the National Described Space Standards with overall areas of 72 and 75m² (greater than 70m² for a two-bedroom dwelling with 3 sleeping spaces) and all bedrooms are greater than 7.5m² overall and 2.15m wide, with the double bedrooms being greater than 11.5m². All rooms have at least one window and will be adequately lit, the plans have been articulated to allow most natural light into the main living spaces by placing living space at the front of the ground floor and bedrooms at the back of the first floor, making use of the existing windows to minimise the need for new openings.

The above shows that the proposals can be seen to have a neutral impact on the area's heritage status by preserving the conservation area.

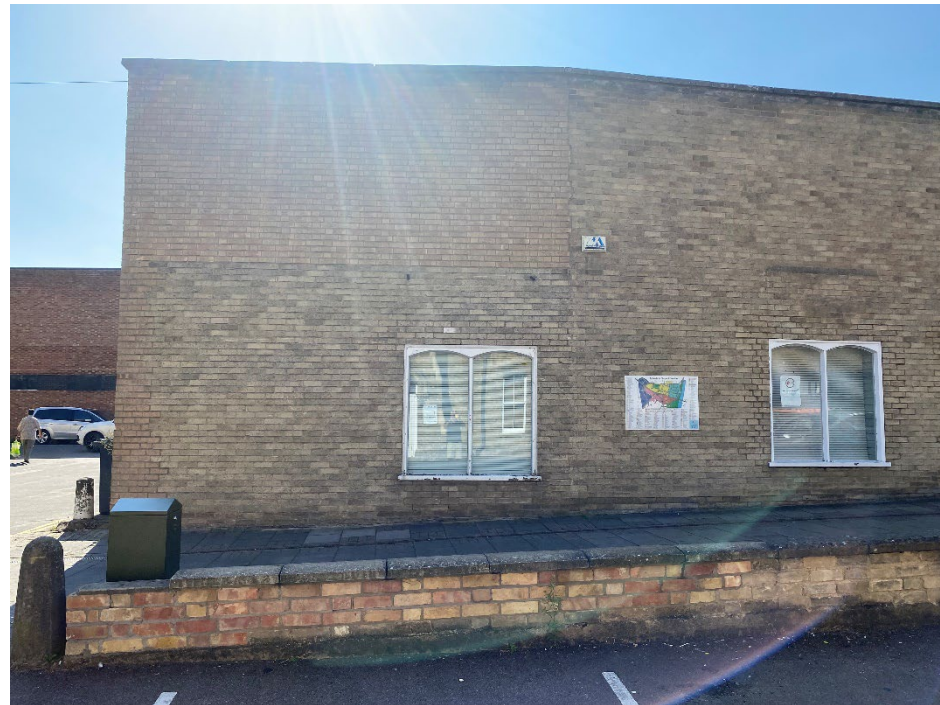


Image 7



Image 7 Side elevation and rear access



Image 8 Front door



Image 9 Interior

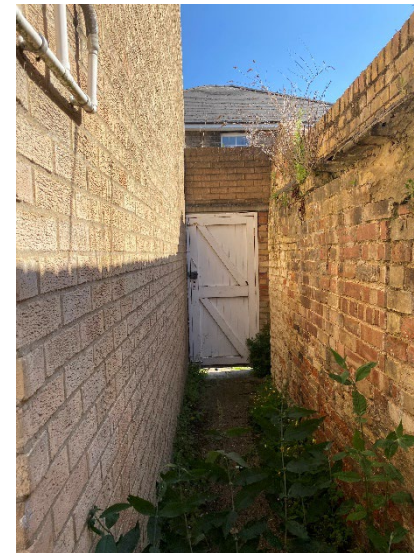


Image 10 Rear access

7 DESIGN & ACCESS

Use – The current use of the building is a shop and office, Class E. The application seeks change its use to two dwellings under Class C3.

Layout – Both existing and proposed layouts are clearly demonstrated in the additional plans submitted and are material only.

Amount – No extensions are proposed so the works will be within the volume of the existing building.

Access – No alteration.

Landscape – No alteration.

Appearance – As existing building but for replacement windows and additional apertures.

In conclusion, the works have no effect on the Conservation Area and provide the applicants needs without further new build extensions.