

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed conversion of existing building, with first and second floor extensions, to create 19 apartments with associated parking

Mines Rescue Station, Infirmary Road, Chesterfield S41 7NF

Dovedale Property Ltd

November 2023



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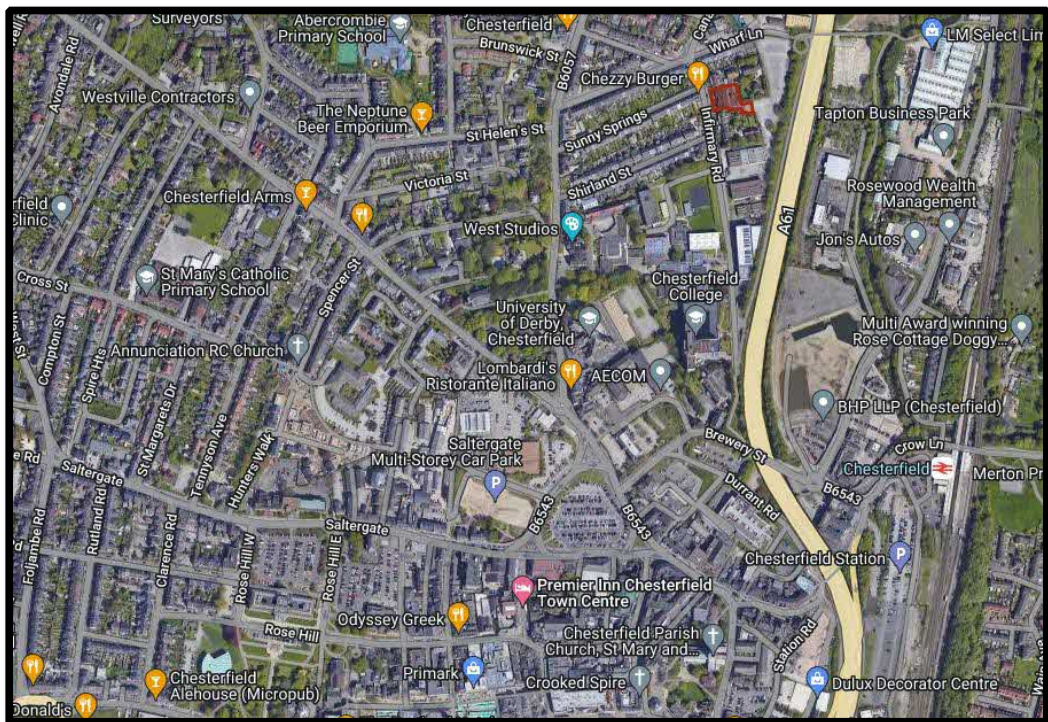
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Charlotte Stainton MRTPI, trading as Stainton Planning, and accompanies a planning application for conversion of the former Chesterfield Mines Rescue Station, with first and second floor extensions, to create 19 apartments with associated parking. The planning statement describes the site location and planning policy context and explains the proposed scheme and why it complies with the relevant policies.
- 1.2 The former Mines Rescue Station is on the Local List of Heritage Assets, but it is currently vacant and falling into disrepair. Having most recently been used by Chesterfield College for teaching and storage it has been vacant since November 2020. The proposed development would bring this building back into use and enable it to be repaired and enhanced whilst delivering nineteen dwellings. The report identifies the significant benefits that would be delivered.
- 1.3 The full plans and images, Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement of Significance, which accompany the application show how the proposed scheme can be accommodated, whilst respecting the character and appearance of the existing Mines Rescue Station and respecting the privacy and amenity of neighbours. The existing accesses are suitable to accommodate this development and sufficient parking is available. The application is also accompanied by ecological reports to assess the impact on biodiversity, which would be enhanced by the proposals. A Flood Risk Assessment also forms part of the application pack and demonstrates that flood risk is low.
- 1.4 It is concluded that the development would accord with the Development Plan and should be approved without delay. To grant permission would therefore be in accordance with Government Policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which aims to deliver a sufficient supply of homes and make efficient use of property.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The application site is within the administrative area of Chesterfield Borough Council approximately 600m to the north of Chesterfield Town Centre (as the crow flies). The site lies to the east side of Infirmary Road which runs approximately north to south and sits between the A61 to the east and Sheffield Road (B6057) to the west. The site is close to local facilities and services, Chesterfield Town Centre and Chesterfield Railway Station. The red polygon on the Google image below shows the general location of the site.

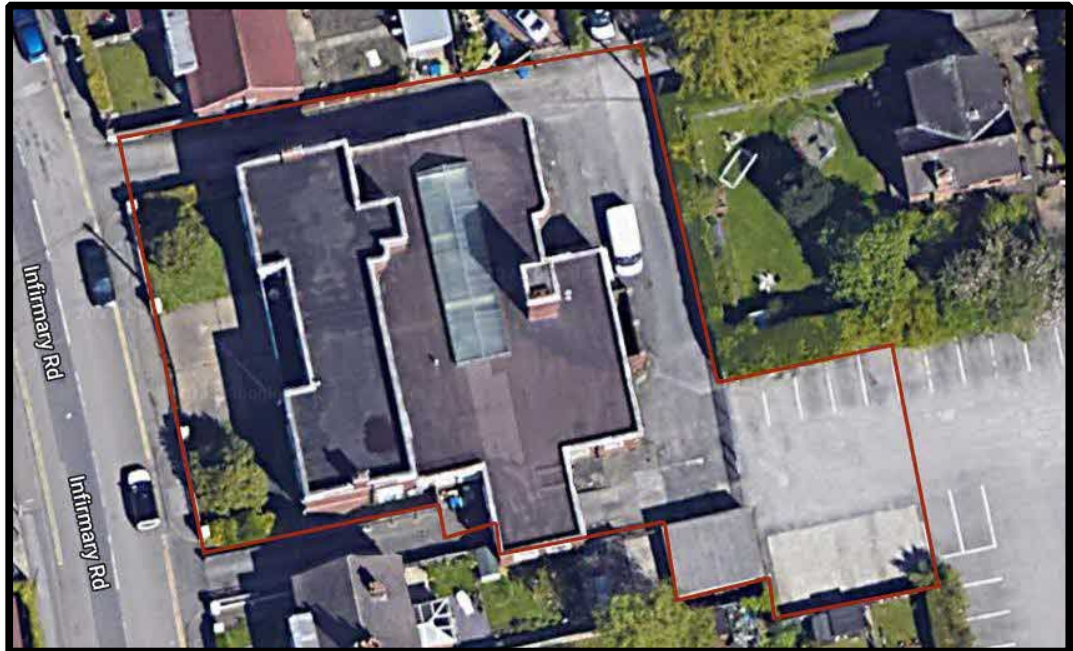


- 2.2 The application site is the property known as the Chesterfield Mines Rescue Station as well as an area of former Chesterfield College carpark to the rear and a garage owned by one of the neighbouring properties. The red outline on the image below indicates the location of the application site, although the precise site boundaries must be taken from the submitted location plan.



- 2.3 To the north of the application site there are a pair of semi-detached houses (19 and 21) that face onto Infirmary Road. There are also a pair of semi-detached houses that face towards the site and share an access with the application property and back onto houses on Wharf Lane. To the north east there is a further pair of semi-detached houses that also share access with the site.
- 2.4 To the east is a detached dwelling with landscaped gardens, and Chesterfield College carpark.
- 2.5 To the south are further semi-detached dwellings that face onto Infirmary Road and a pair of houses with their rear gardens backing onto the site.
- 2.6 To the west is Infirmary Road with a takeaway opposite as well as residential properties.
- 2.7 Infirmary Road is a single carriageway road which is a cul de sac that terminates to the south outside Chesterfield College. There is a walking route to Chesterfield Town Centre from the south west end of Infirmary Road.

- 2.8 The applicant's property consists of a substantial building that is the former Mines Rescue Station as well as access, parking and soft landscape areas. The red line below is only approximate and reference must be made to the submitted plans for the precise boundaries of the site.



- 2.9 The building is set back approximately 8m from the site frontage which gives space for parking and soft landscaping in front of the building.
- 2.10 There is a shared vehicular access to the north side of the building which leads around to the east/rear of the building. The applicant has recently purchased part of the college carpark to the south east of the site, and is in the process of purchasing a garage to the south (contracts have exchanged and completion is anticipated very soon) and therefore these areas are also included in the application site.
- 2.11 To the south side of the building there is a pedestrian access path leading to a door and small yard.
- 2.12 The Mines Rescue Station dates from 1917 and is of imposing proportions and symmetrical design that contributes to the character of the streetscene. The building is a substantial two storeys at the front and single storey to the rear, and has a flat roof with parapet walls, there is also a substantial

basement. The principal elevation of the building faces Infirmary Road and contains most of the building's decorative features. There are various attractive details including window surrounds with pediments and hoods, and ornate pilasters and moulded stone parapets. Despite the original features, due to lack of use in recent years (and declining use over many years), the building requires substantial refurbishment both inside and out.



3.0 Site History

- 3.1 Using the Council's online search facility, the following previous planning applications were revealed for this property:

Erection of signboard - Ref. No: CHE/0703/0505 | Status: Conditional Permission

Change of use to light industrial - Ref. No: CHE/06/00721/COU | Status: Application Withdrawn

Change of use of building and car park from category B2 to D1 (education) Ref. No: CHE/10/00016/COU | Status: Conditional Permission

- 3.2 The building was constructed in 1917 as a Mines Rescue Station. Since it closed down in 1992 it has been owned by the Red Cross and the Salvation Army until it was acquired by Chesterfield College around 2011. The building was in use as an Arts College by Chesterfield College until 2017, who then used it as storage until the current owner purchased the property in Nov 2020. The building has been vacant since November 2020.

4.0 The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The proposal is for the change of use and extension of this property to create 19 apartments. The scheme includes alterations to the building and first and second floor extensions to facilitate its conversion. There will be 19 parking spaces provided for the residents.
- 4.2 The scheme would deliver a total of 19 apartments comprising: ten units on the ground floor, seven units on the first floor and two units on the second floor. The table below sets out the size of each unit, the number of beds and the anticipated occupancy.

Floor	Unit	Size m2	Beds	Occupancy
Ground	1	61	2	Double
	2	41	1	Single
	3	45	1	Single
	4	50	1	Double
	5	45	1	Single
	6	49	1	Single
	7	38	1	Single
	8	62	1	Double
	9	63	2	Double
	10	40	1	Single
1st	11	38	1	Single
	12	44	1	Single
	12B	43	1	Single
	14	44	1	Single
	15	39	1	Single
	16	40	1	Single
	17	44	1	Single
2nd	18	69	2	Double
	19	44	1	Single

- 4.3 The proposal to convert the building would work sensitively with the structure and utilise the existing window and door openings and other features as far as possible.
- 4.4 To ensure that the conversion of the existing building is viable, the scheme includes upper storey extensions. There are two separate extensions proposed: a first-floor extension to the rear of the building above the existing ground floor element, and a second-floor extension above the existing first floor element towards the front. The existing footprint of the building would remain unaltered.
- 4.5 The site has two access points, one to the front of the building which will provide three parking spaces in the proposed scheme, and one shared access to the north side of the building which leads to the rear where there would be 16 parking spaces. There would be one parking space per proposed apartment and electric vehicle charging stations would be available.
- 4.6 The application is accompanied by a full set of existing and proposed plans, 3D visuals, Design and Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment 2020, Bat Roost Update 2022, Biodiversity Metric, Biodiversity Net Gain Letter, Chesterfield Mines Rescue History Brochure and a Heritage Statement of Significance. Any further information reasonably requested by the Council will be provided during consideration of the application and the agent would be grateful if the Council would discuss any questions or concerns at an early stage.

5.0 Pre-application Work

- 5.1 Section 4 the NPPF (2021) encourages pre-application discussions between applicants and the Local Planning Authority. It is stated at paragraph 39 “Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community”.
- 5.2 The applicant, Mr Cusimano, recognises the importance of the Chesterfield Mines Rescue Station to the local social history of Chesterfield and has taken his responsibility to this building very seriously.
- 5.3 Since the property was purchased in 2020 Mr Cusimano, has worked with local researchers to uncover the history of the building including painstaking searches through documents and photographs as well as interviewing the former Brigadesmen. As a result, the applicant has published a fascinating booklet ‘The Mines Rescue Service Chesterfield’, the pdf version of the booklet is provided as part of this planning application.
- 5.4 A website has also been set up to record the history studies for the building as well as providing a platform for ensuring that the information can be easily updated and accessed as required:
<http://chesterfieldminerescue.co.uk/>
- 5.5 The applicant’s work has been featured in the Derbyshire Times more than once, with a link to one example given below:
<https://www.derbyshiretimes.co.uk/news/people/chesterfield-mines-rescue-station-redevelopment-sparks-plea-for-memories-and-photos-to-preserve-history-3406929>
- 5.6 On 25 June 2022 a pre-application enquiry was submitted to Chesterfield Borough Council, with a separate submission sent to the Conservation

Officer, to seek the Council's opinion on the proposed development. A response to the pre-application enquiry was received from Paul Staniforth, Development Management and Conservation Manager on 1 September 2022.

- 5.7 Detailed comments were provided in the pre-application response from the Council. They confirmed that the proposal to redevelop the site for housing in principle is considered to accord generally with the adopted strategy set out in policy. The site is within the existing built-up area and is an asset which is currently not being used. Stonegravels is an area where new housing development has been accepted and further housing development would be considered appropriate in principle.
- 5.8 The Council confirmed that the main planning issues in respect of the proposal will relate to the character of the area, heritage impact, amenity standards, the impact on neighbours, biodiversity/ecology and the highways impact and parking provision. Detailed comments were provided by the Council on each of these issues. Those comments are not unnecessarily repeated here but were considered in developing the final proposals for submission with this planning application.
- 5.9 The Council welcomed the opportunity to bring the building back into use and confirmed that residential use is appropriate. The Planning Manager confirmed that the details of the scheme need to be carefully considered in designing the scheme. This would ensure that the benefits outweigh any concerns in the planning balance.
- 5.10 As part of the ongoing work to understand, document and share details of the history of the site, in December 2022, the applicant led a presentation at Chesterfield Library about the Mines Rescue Station. This seminar sought to explain the research, and answer questions from interested parties. As well as an explanation of the work carried out, copies of the booklet were available at the event and information was provided about the website and ongoing

research. Below are some photographs from this event which evidence the applicant's commitment to understanding and recording the history of this property.



- 5.11 This valuable work, led by the applicant's wish to ensure the building is fully understood, will guarantee that the important social history of the Chesterfield Mines Rescue Station has been recorded and can be understood by future generations.
- 5.12 Mr Cusimano is now keen to secure a viable future for the Mines Rescue Station by respecting and retaining the existing building and converting it to residential use.

6.0 Planning Policy Context

- 6.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Development Management Policies & Guidance

- 6.2 The site is within the administrative area of Chesterfield Borough Council. In terms of Section 54a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the starting point for the consideration of this application are the policies of the Chesterfield Local Plan 2018-2035. The Council's Residential Design Guide 'Successful Places' is also relevant.
- 6.3 The following policies are the main Local Plan policies of relevance to the development proposed.
- CLP1 Spatial Strategy (Strategic Policy)
 - CLP2 Principles for Location of Development
 - CLP3 Flexibility in Delivery of Housing
 - CLP14 A Healthy Environment
 - CLP16 Biodiversity
 - CLP20 Design
 - CLP21 Historic Environment
- 6.4 The main policy approach as set out in policy CLP1 is to concentrate new development within walking distance of a range of key services. The policy sets out the broad locations for growth in the Borough and Policy CLP2 establishes criteria against which development proposals are to be assessed and which promote the Principles for Location of Development based on concentration in close proximity to centres.
- 6.5 Policies CLP14 and CLP20 in the Local Plan state that proposals for new development should respect the character and form of the site by virtue of its appearance and architectural style and have an acceptable impact on the amenity of neighbours. This policy notes that proposals should contribute to the distinct character of the Borough and enrich the quality of existing places.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)

6.6 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

6.7 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF explains that 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):

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;

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

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.

6.8 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF explains that these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of

the policies in the 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.

- 6.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (at paragraph 11) sets out the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means: "approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay..."
- 6.10 Section 5 of the NPPF relates to the Government's desire to deliver a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 60 in Section 5 of the NPPF states that "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".
- 6.11 The 2021 National Planning Policy Framework also sets out the Government's core planning principles and these include: seeking to ensure high quality design and high levels of amenity for all. Paragraph 124 refers to the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens) and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places. Paragraph 126 comments that 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.

7.0 Planning Assessment

History of the Site

- 7.1 In the early 1900's coal mining was at the heart of British industry and over 1.2 million people were employed by UK Coal in 1920. Mining was a dangerous job as tunnel collapses and gas explosions were commonplace. There were 85,000 recorded mine worker deaths between 1873 and 1953. In 1908 alone there were 1,345 deaths and 143,258 workers injured or disabled as a result of mining accidents. Across Europe, governments were acknowledging the need to ensure provision for the rescue of mine workers and indeed a Royal Commission in Britain had suggested the need for rescue stations as early as 1886.
- 7.2 The first official mines rescue centre opened in Tankersley, South Yorkshire in 1902 and an Act of Parliament in 1911 required mine owners to provide trained rescue workers and apparatus and (initially) for there to be a rescue centre within 10 miles of each mine.
- 7.3 In 1914 it was announced that Chesterfield would be the headquarters for a rescue station. Work was delayed by World War I, but the building on Infirmary Road was constructed in 1917, and opened in 1918, providing a state of art facility. Wages were lower than working on the coalface, but accommodation was provided in coal board housing along Infirmary Road and it was a sought after role. Coal workers had to pass stringent fitness tests to be appointed a Brigadesman.
- 7.4 There is significant information about the operation of the Rescue Station and the lives of the Brigadesmen and their families, in the booklet and website published by the applicant.
- 7.5 Following the decline of the coal industry in the last quarter of the 20th Century, the majority of the UK mine rescue stations were no longer required. Since it closed in 1992, the Chesterfield Mines Rescue Station was owned by the Red Cross and the Salvation Army until it was acquired by Chesterfield

College around 2011. The building was in use as an Arts College by Chesterfield College until approximately 2017 and the college then used it for storage until the property was purchased by the applicant in November 2020. After many years of decline, the building has been vacant for the last three years and requires urgent repairs and refurbishment.

- 7.6 The building has a number of issues including an underground stream under/through the basement and a failed ground floor. It is understood that previous potential buyers wanted to demolish the building to construct housing, but the Council discouraged this proposal. The applicant has taken structural advice, and it has been confirmed that the existing building is capable of conversion, although significant work will be required, which will impact on the viability of a conversion scheme (hence the need for the extensions).
- 7.7 The Rescue Station is not a Listed Building and is not in a Conservation Area however it is on Chesterfield's Local List of Heritage Assets, primarily due to its social history interest.
- 7.8 In Section 5 of this Statement it was explained how the applicant has fully embraced the heritage interest that the Rescue Station holds. As part of this work, ECUS were employed to prepare a Heritage Statement of Significance in June 2022, to feed into development of the proposals for this planning application. In their pre-application comments the Council's Development Management and Conservation Manager confirmed that they "agree with the conclusion of the Statement of Significance which confirms that the features affected by the scheme are not key in appreciating the buildings significance".

Principle of Residential Use

- 7.9 From heritage and visual amenity perspectives, retention of the existing building is highly desirable. In the pre-application comments the Council officer stated: "Retention of the building is desirable and welcomed and this will assist in limiting any impacts arising from a development of the site".

- 7.10 It is necessary to secure a viable use for the existing property to ensure that pressure to demolish the building for redevelopment no longer exists. The proposed use also needs to generate sufficient development value to ensure that the building can be repaired and refurbished to a high standard to ensure its longevity.
- 7.11 The proposed development would deliver short term economic benefits through the provision of construction jobs and trade for local suppliers and contractors while the development is constructed. The applicant is a well-respected local employer who has delivered significant high-quality residential accommodation in the Chesterfield area.
- 7.12 The development would have a significant social benefit by delivering nineteen, additional, high-quality, small dwellings to the property market. The scheme would provide one and two bedroom apartments as well as one studio. These smaller properties are in significant demand close to Chesterfield Town Centre and would be ideal for young professionals who work in the town centre or would like easy access to the railway station for commuting.
- 7.13 The proposal is for a residential use which should generate sufficient development value to enable the existing building to be retained and refurbished in a thorough and sensitive manner.
- 7.14 The site comprises a previously developed property within a built-up area of Chesterfield. The site is not designated for any particular use in the adopted Chesterfield Local Plan however it falls within the built-up area and within the settlement boundary of Stonegravel. It is considered that because the site is close to facilities such as Chesterfield College and is within easy walking distance of the Chesterfield Town Centre and the facilities and services which it offers, including the frequent bus services in and out of the town, the

proposal to redevelop the site for housing in principle accords generally with the adopted strategy set out in policy.

- 7.15 The site is within the existing built-up area and is an asset which is currently not being used. Stonegravels is an area where new housing development has been approved by the Council and further housing development would be considered appropriate in principle, as confirmed in the Council's pre-application comments. The proposal would secure the regeneration benefits of the repair and refurbishment of the existing building, and contributions will be made to providing wider infrastructure capacity through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments.
- 7.16 In principle, the retention of the existing building is highly desirable and the conversion and extension of the building to provide apartments would be in accordance with planning policies.

Design

- 7.17 The design of the scheme has been developed on the basis of retention of as many original features as possible whilst repairing and enhancing the character and appearance of the building.
- 7.18 Although it needs renovation, the building is of a permanent and substantial construction. The proposal to convert the building would enable the building to be repaired and give it a long-term use. The scheme would use the existing window and door openings, with minimal alterations, and work with the features of the existing building to retain its character and appearance. The internal spaces have been designed to fit with the external scale and features of the building and not the other way around - resulting in a good design which responds to the character of the existing building.
- 7.19 The proposed extensions comprise of an additional storey on the existing roofs. The proposed external materials would be timber cladding and

aluminium windows, powder coated black, although, the applicant would be happy to discuss alternative materials with the Council if required.

- 7.20 The proposed extension above the front of the building, at the second floor, would be set behind the existing parapet, therefore keeping the principal elevation intact. The proportions of the extension are very modest. It would project only 2m above the existing parapet. The extension is designed to be complementary and sympathetic to the existing building, whilst ensuring the original character of the building is preserved. The proposed extension will add to local distinctiveness and continue to give the area individuality.
- 7.21 The rear extension at first floor would be set in from the existing walls and be of a lesser height than the parapet on the front of the building so it would not be clearly visible from the principal elevation or Infirmary Road.
- 7.22 In their pre-application comments the Council stated: “Your proposal includes extension of the building which have a plain utilitarian character however I consider this allows for legibility of the existing building and is not in itself out of character when considering the developments close by at Chesterfield College. Subject to appropriate materials and detailing I do not consider the use or extension of the building will have an adverse impact or be at odds with the prevailing character of the area”.

Privacy and Amenity

- 7.23 As shown at 4.2 the floorspace provided in each of the apartments would exceed the minimum floorspace standards set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards. Each apartment would have sufficient natural light and outlook and would be renovated/constructed and decorated to the very high standards of the applicant’s other properties.
- 7.24 The development of apartments within an existing building, and the wish to provide as many parking spaces as possible means that it is not possible to provide outside amenity areas/gardens for all the apartments. There will

however be roof terraces for several of the first-floor apartments as shown on the floor plan. These roof terraces will also give the opportunity for the residents to have plants in pots and planters, further adding to the biodiversity potential of the scheme. We consider that the wish to retain the existing building outweighs any potential concern about lack of outside amenity space. Many people who chose to live in apartments do not have outside space and they do not always wish to have any. People choose to live close to the Town Centre for the benefits the location delivers in terms of access to services and employment, and they are generally aware of and willing to accept the compromises that come with the convenience of such a sustainable location.

- 7.25 The Mines Rescue Station was mostly recently owned by Chesterfield College and it was used for many years for teaching art students, and then more recently for storage. The continued commercial or education use of the building, with the associated comings and goings, could have significant impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbours. Any potential neighbour impacts of the proposed residential use should be considered in the context of the alternative i.e. continued commercial uses.
- 7.26 The proposed layout of the conversion apartments as well as the position and scale of the extensions have been carefully considered in the context of impact on neighbouring properties.
- 7.27 The applicant is very willing to discuss any concerns with the neighbours and has already contacted them to offer this. Obscure glazing of certain windows (or parts of them) will also be considered if necessary. It is important to recognise that the floor levels within the building are low relative to the windowsill heights and therefore overlooking would not be a significant issue.

Heritage Impact Assessment

- 7.28 The Chesterfield Mines Rescue Station is not a listed building and is not located in a Conservation Area however the Council has included it on their List of Local Heritage Assets.

- 7.29 The applicant has fully embraced the local heritage interest of the building by commissioning extensive research, publishing the history booklet, setting up the website, holding a seminar in Chesterfield Library and instructing ECUS to prepare a Statement of Significance.
- 7.30 The proposed development would bring this building back into use, secure its future, remove the threat of demolition and ensure it is repaired and refurbished to a high standard.
- 7.31 The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to retain the existing features and use existing openings as far as possible. The proposed extensions would be sensitively integrated into the appearance of the area without being prominent. The existing footprint would be retained.
- 7.32 The scheme includes the creation of a memorial garden to the front which would further enhance the heritage value of the property.
- 7.33 It is considered that the proposed scheme would not result in any harm to the building. It would instead ensure that the building is brought back into use and has a future.
- 7.34 There are no designated heritage assets on this site and no harm to any local heritage assets has been identified, conversely enhancement would result from the proposals. It is therefore not necessary to undertake the balancing exercise at paragraph 202 of the NPPF 2021 (i.e. harm vs public benefit).

Energy Efficiency, Flood Risk and Biodiversity

- 7.35 The applicant is carefully considering the options for making the building more energy efficient to reduce energy use and costs. This must be undertaken whilst ensuring that the scheme remains viable. The scheme will introduce an abundance of new internal insulation of different types and the applicant hopes to achieve an EPC rating of C. Improvements will be made to the

windows and doors with the introduction of new double glazing, with sash windows to the front elevation, and uPVC external doors. The scheme would utilise low energy infrared heating and LED lighting throughout. Additional planting is proposed as set out in the biodiversity report to enhance the existing (relatively low) biodiversity value of the property.

- 7.36 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which demonstrates that there is no significant flood risk in relation to the proposed development, although there is an issue with water in the basement. The development would not increase the footprint of the building or the hardstanding areas and therefore would not increase surface water run-off.
- 7.37 A bat survey was undertaken at an early stage in the project and was followed by an update survey in 2022. The scheme is not anticipated to have any impact on protected species. Biodiversity net gain has also been calculated using the Metric and an explanatory letter provided by the consultant ecologist. Biodiversity enhancements in the form of planting (including a new tree) will ensure that the scheme results in biodiversity net gain.

Access and Parking

- 7.38 The means of access to the proposed development would be via continued use of the existing accesses which serve the Mines Rescue Station. There are two existing access points that will be used.
- 7.39 The first access is to the front of the building as shown below. This access is wide and has good visibility. The access is clearly visible to other road users along Infirmary Road due to good forward visibility. Three parking spaces will be provided to the front of the building utilising this access.



7.40 The second access is situated to the north side of the mines rescue building and is shown below. Visibility at the access is good, particularly due to the wide footways. Forward visibility along Infirmary Road is also good meaning that the access is clearly visible to other road users. The northern access is shared by six dwellings to the north and east of the application site. The development proposes 16 parking spaces utilising this shared northern access.



- 7.41 The existing accesses have been used by the various occupants of the Mines Rescue Station since it was first constructed. The impact of the traffic associated with the development now proposed, should be considered in the context of the potential for the building to continue to be used for commercial activities if the residential scheme is not approved.
- 7.42 The site owner has purchased an area of the Chesterfield College carpark and is in the process of buying a garage building, to the rear of the site. These areas have been included in the application site boundaries to maximise space for parking.
- 7.43 A total of 19 parking spaces are proposed as part of the scheme. This equates to one space per apartment, which is considered appropriate for these relatively small dwellings in a sustainable location. The site is within walking and cycling distance of local facilities, as well as Chesterfield Town Centre and Chesterfield Railway Station. This means that the occupants of the proposed apartments would not need to own a car to live in this location.
- 7.44 It is considered that use of the existing accesses to serve the proposed apartments, with the provision of 19 parking spaces would be acceptable, particularly when taking account of the potential commercial use of the building if the change of use does not take place.
- 7.45 There is no evidence that the proposed development would result unacceptable impact on highway safety, or that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (test at Paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2021).

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Although not nationally designated, the Chesterfield Mines Rescue Station is a local heritage asset, and the applicant has fully embraced the heritage interest of this building. The applicant has commissioned a detailed study into the history of the Mines Rescue Station, published a booklet on the history, set up a website to record the information discovered, and led a seminar to present the findings to the local community. A formal Heritage Statement of Significance has also been prepared by ECUS.
- 8.2 The retention and refurbishment of the Mines Rescue Station is a very significant benefit of the proposed development -the scheme would provide a long-term future for this local heritage asset and remove the pressure for demolition. The scheme also includes the creation of a memorial garden, further extending the heritage benefits. Other benefits include the provision of 19 high-quality apartments to add to the local housing supply and providing homes for people, short-term construction employment, and contracts for local people and suppliers during the construction works. The scheme would also significantly enhance the appearance of the building through its renovation.
- 8.3 The proposed alterations would respect the character and form of the existing building and the extensions would be of a sensitive scale and design which would complement the existing building and local area and would not be prominent in the streetscene.
- 8.4 There would be no significant impact on highway safety, neighbours, biodiversity, flood risk, or the surrounding streetscene.
- 8.5 It is therefore concluded that the development would be sustainable and should be approved without delay. To grant permission would be in accordance with the Council's Development Plan and Government Policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.