

Planning Statement 1

Including Impact & Justification

**Part Conversion of Commercial Premises
to create and 4No Apartments
at**

**Former Barclays Bank
College Street
Rushden
NN10 0NN**

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DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Document Reference 23-078-PS1

Conversion of Commercial Premises to create 4No apartments at Former Barclays Bank, College Street, Rushden NN10 0NN

INTRODUCTION

Sidey Design Architecture have been commissioned to identify potential redevelopment opportunities and planning implications for the above property. This planning statement forms part of a prior approval planning application. The property lies within the Rushden Conservation Area as shown on the map below. The Conservation area is edged in purple and the former bank premises in red. College Street is a one-way street accessed from the High Street with the egress onto Duck Street.

This practice has been involved in several successful bank premises conversions, retaining retail to the ground floor with residential use to other areas. This includes former HSBC banks in Higham Ferrers, and Wellingborough and the former Barclays bank in Thrapston.

Unfortunately, the application submitted in July 2023 ref NE/23/00713/PDU was refused as the case officer deemed there was insufficient information submitted regarding daylight to habitable rooms. This has been addressed in this application with more information given. Also, this reapplication is now split between part conversion of the ground floor to create a retail unit and creating two first floor apartments and an application to convert the rear ground floor to 4No. further residential apartments. This Planning Statement relates to the conversion to 4No. ground floor residential units.

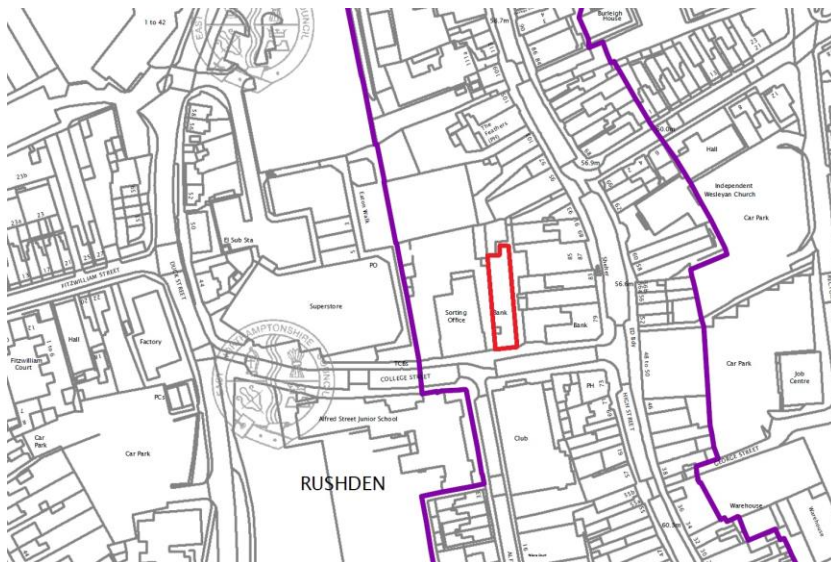


Figure 1 – extract of conservation area outlined in purple, showing the approx. outline of former Barclays bank outlined in red.

LOCATION

The site is located on the College Street close to the junction of Alfred Street. It is located within the conservation area and part of an historic street scene.

PREAMBLE

This is an application to determine if prior approval is required for: Change of Use from Commercial, Business, Services (Use Class E) to Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) – Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA

The property subject of this application is a former bank and is a prominent building on College Street. The banking hall occupied the ground floor with offices to the rear. The first floor consisted of offices and training rooms.

This application is for part conversion of the ground floor to 4No. residential units. The layouts have been amended to take account of an existing glazed lantern which affords ample natural daylight. This has been highlighted on the revised drawings and the flat layouts modified to take account of this feature. A further application will be submitted under separate cover to seek approval to amend the approval ref NE/23/00743/FUL modifying the door and window positions to take account of the revised flat layouts.

The extract below is from Government guidance publication on planning for town centre uses:

Planning for town centre vitality and viability

What role can planning authorities play in supporting the management, adaptation, and growth of town centres? For planning purposes, town centres as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework comprise a range of locations where main town centre uses are concentrated, including city and town centres, district, and local centres (and so includes places that are often referred to as high streets). Local planning authorities can take a leading role in promoting a positive vision for these areas, bringing together stakeholders, and supporting sustainable economic and employment growth. They need to consider structural changes in the economy, in particular changes in shopping and leisure patterns and formats, the impact these are likely to have on individual town centres, and how the planning tools available to them can support necessary adaptation and change.

A wide range of complementary uses can, if suitably located, help to support the vitality of town centres, including residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare, and educational development. The same is true of temporary activities such as ‘pop ups,’ which will often benefit from permitted development rights. **Residential development in particular can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres, giving communities easier access to a range of services.** Given their close proximity to transport networks and local shops and services, local authorities may wish to consider locating specialist housing for different groups including older people within town centres or edge of centre locations.

Evening and nighttime activities have the potential to increase economic activity within town centres and provide additional employment opportunities. They can allow town centres to diversify and help develop their unique brand and offer services beyond retail. In fostering such activities, local authorities will also need to consider and address any wider impacts in relation to crime, noise and security.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

10/01373/FUL Conversion of first floor offices in existing building to create two flats. **Permitted.**

17/01491/FUL Renewal of Planning Permission EN/10/01373/FUL to convert first floor into two flats. **Refused & subsequent Appeal dismissed.**

NE/21/00797/FUL Removal of the existing individual lettering, existing masonry to be made good on completion; Removal of existing ATM with installation of new glazing and timber framing to match existing on completion. **Permitted.**

NE/23/00713/PDU Change of Use to create 6 no. flats consisting of 5 no. 1-bedroom and 1 no. 2-bedroom dwellings including retail unit to ground floor. **Refused**

NE/23/00743/FUL Additional external doors and windows to the ground floor. **Approved.**

USE

The extant use of the building subject of this application is commercial. The ground floor was formerly used as a banking hall, with offices, strong room, storage and staff facilities to the rear. The first floor consisted of further offices and training rooms. The basement was for a further strong room and archives/storage. The property has been vacant for over 3 months and has been in commercial use within the last 2 years. It has been a commercial/bank premises since 1947.

It has become apparent that the demand and need for residential is far greater than commercial space. This has also been identified with recent government advice and permitted development rights that exists to encourage change of use of empty retail/commercial spaces to residential use.

PLANNING POLICY

Class MA allows change of use of Commercial, Business, Services to Residential.

This proposal meets all the criteria for this type of application including being within the **maximum floor space allowed; acceptable environmental impacts; acceptable highway impact; flood risk; natural light to all habitable rooms; acceptable fire strategy; no impact on the conservation area.**

LAYOUT

Conversion of the former bank over both concurrent applications totals less than the 1500sq m of floor space allowed under this type of application. Part of the proposal retains a retail area (separate application) to the front of the ground floor. The remainder of the building is proposed to be converted to provide residential accommodation. There is a dedicated bike and bin store proposed.

SCALE

The scale of the building will be unchanged. No extensions are proposed, and conversion is wholly within the existing building footprint/volume.

DESIGN

Careful consideration has been given to the design of the proposed alterations with great emphasis made on retaining the character of the existing building. The front façade of this building is its most prominent feature, and this is not affected by the proposals. We believe the proposal would have an acceptable impact on this property and overall have a positive impact on the conservation area setting.

Vacant buildings can become dilapidated and do not have a positive impact on the conservation area settings and therefore having this building in use is beneficial for the surrounding area and the building itself to prevent it being dis-used and falling into a state of dis-repair.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Obviously, this property is in the town centre where there is a regular activity and background noise. There is also the post office sorting depot adjacent to the property. These were considered as part of the previous application where this location was not considered a reason for refusal.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

Overall the total GIA of the commercial premises is 418sq m. This would equate to 14 parking spaces based on the LHA guidance of 1 parking space to 30sq m. This does not take account of customer parking. The remaining retail space proposed would represent 2 parking spaces, the 3No one-bedroom apartments would equate to 3 spaces and 3No two-bedroom apartments would equate to 6 spaces. This is a total of 11 spaces. Therefore, this development even with visitor spaces (being less than customers to the bank) would have less impact on the highway network.

This specific application is for conversion of the rear ground floor area. This equates to a GIA of 267sq m and a need for circa 8-9 spaces. The proposed 4No. flats consist of two 2bed flats and two 1bed flats would have a requirement of 6 spaces. Again, this gives a lesser impact on the Highway network.

In this instance car ownership is not essential given the proximity of local facilities and transport links. Also, there ample free public car parking for approximately 450 vehicles to the immediate surrounding area. There are ample spaces available during the evening and nighttime hours.

FLOOD RISK

The site is in Flood Zone 1 for Seas and Rivers. No Risk. (See Figure 2).

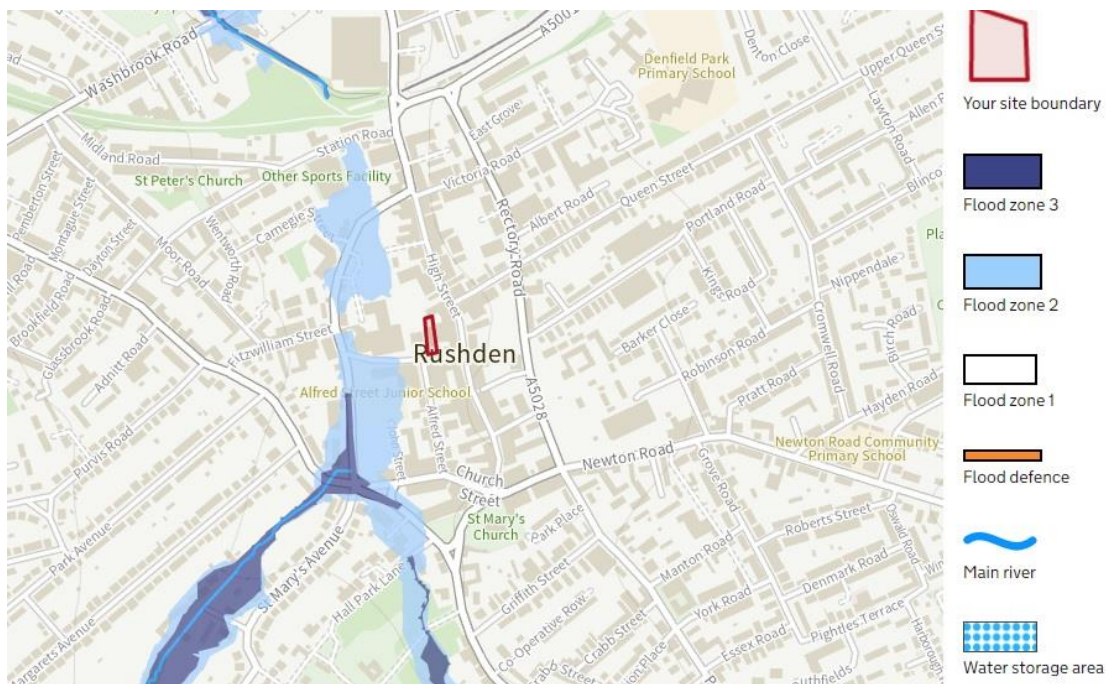
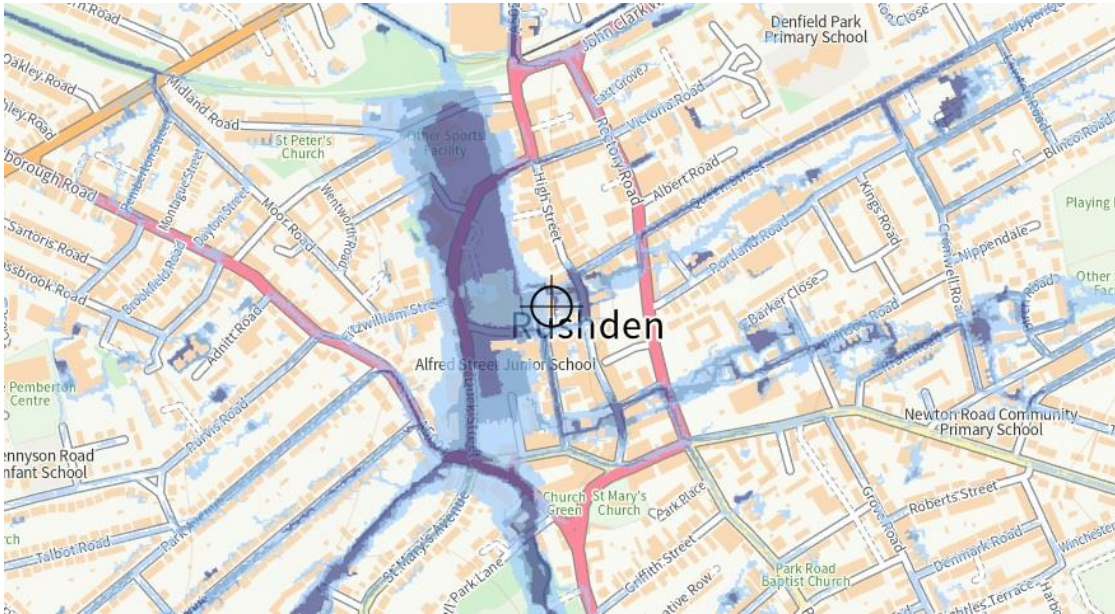


Figure 2. Flood map – Seas & Rivers – site in red.

The site is in the flood area of low risk for surface water flooding. However, the proposed alterations and change of use will have no effect upon this. (See Figure 3).



Figures 3. Flood Map – Surface water – site is target.

No issues were identified with regard flood risks with application reference **NE/23/00713/PDU**.

NATURAL LIGHT

Each habitable room has a minimum of 10% natural light when comparing the amount of glazing as a ratio over the floor area as indicated on the submission drawings. This is clearly marked on proposed floor layouts. 10% light was a previous target percentage requirement in the Building Regulations for all habitable rooms however there is no minimum light requirement in the current Building Regulations. There are a limited number of taller buildings adjacent the property, but these are more than compensated by the natural light provided by the existing/proposed windows and the glazed lantern.



Figure 4 – photo showing natural light to what would be the main area of Flat 2. As the building is vacant and being regularly vandalised most of the windows are currently boarded up.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The property is within the Rushden conservation area. None of the features to the historic bank façade will be affected by this proposal. Currently the building is empty and suffering badly from vandalism and is starting to become an eyesore. Change of use would give the building a purpose and ultimately give positive benefit to the conservation area.

FIRE STRATEGY

Need for a Fire strategy is not applicable to this application.

SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY APPRAISAL

The proposed works will be designed to accord with current building regulations Part L1A. The flats will have a carbon index less than the current building. Proposed sources of energy efficient measures are to include energy efficient lighting and equipment. Heating will be by high efficiency electric radiators. It will be a well-managed project encouraging minimum waste.

DESIGNING OUT CRIME

Security alarms could be fitted to the individual properties. Occupied properties will naturally make the immediate area safer and more secure.

WASTE

Waste and recycling provisions are indicated to the rear of the property in a dedicated bin and recycling area. This is proposed to be waste and recycling bins as provided by the local authority. This would meet the needs of the proposed residential units. It is believed the waste from the ground floor retail unit will be accommodated in a waste sacks stored within the premises (basement) and would be collected by LA or commercial waste operators.

LANDSCAPING

No landscaping is proposed as part of this application.

ACCESS

Access is via College Street. There is a bus stop situated directly opposite the property for links to other major towns. There are good road links to this area with the A6 1.3 miles to the east for routes north/south and the A45 2.1 miles to the north for routes east or 1.9 miles west for routes west. The nearest railway station is Wellingborough 4.9 miles to the west for national and international links.

Inclusive Access

The proposed flats are to the ground and first floors. Consequently, access to the first-floor flats would only be suitable for ambulant disabled persons.



Figure 6. Street view of property. (2021).

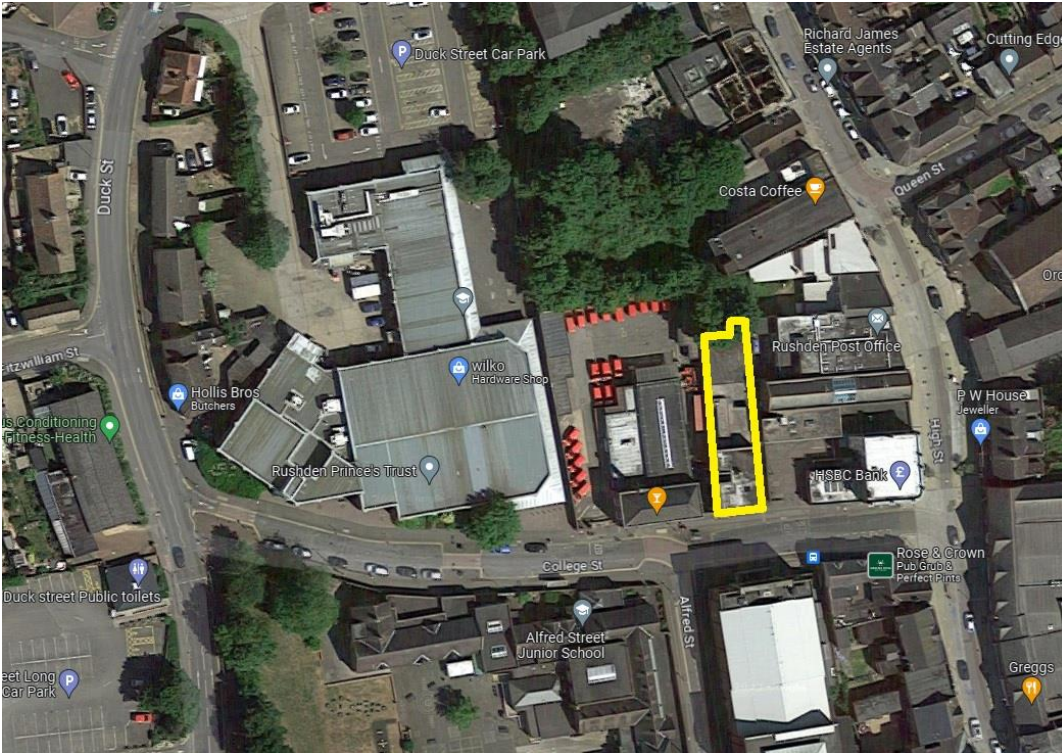


Figure 7 - Aerial photo of the former bank premises – approximately outlined in yellow.

IMPACT & JUSTIFICATION

No changes to front façade are proposed. The design of the proposed alterations have been well considered and appropriate for the location. This would have a positive impact on the conservation area setting.

CONCLUSION & SUMMARY

The application represents a sustainable form of development. It would provide dwellings with an identified need and would add to the mix of housing available in the area. The impact on the neighbouring properties would be minimal and acceptable in this urban environment. There is history of approval of similar schemes in the district. The size of the dwellings meets the national space standards with ample natural light to habitable rooms.

The proposal is fully compliant with the national MA planning policy criteria below:

- Completed form including a written description of the proposed development.
- The appropriate fee £100 per dwelling. (paid to LA).
- A plan which is drawn to an identified scale and shows the direction of North indicating the site and showing the proposed development outlined in red.
- Floor Plans which are drawn to an identified scale (1:50/1:100) Indicating the dimensions and proposed use of each room, the position and dimensions of windows, doors and walls.
- Existing and Proposed Elevations of the dwellinghouses.
- Flood Risk Assessment - only where the application site falls in Flood Zone 2 or Zone 3; or an area in Flood Zone 1 which has critical drainage problems, and which has been notified to the LPA by the Environment Agency.
- A Fire Statement that covers the fire safety design principles, concepts & standards that have been applied to the development [Only required if over 18m / 7 storeys].
- A report from a chartered engineer or other competent professional confirming that the external wall construction of the existing building complies with paragraph B4(1) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended) [Should be only required under Part 20 applications - not Class MA].
- Confirmation in regard to Agricultural Tenancies.