

Design & Access Statement

119 High Street
Rushden
Northants
NN10 0NZ

Design & Access Statement

On behalf of:
NB Property Holdings Ltd

Proposal:
Proposed conversion and extension of existing store to rear of shops at ground floor & first floor rear extension to create 2no dwellings at the rear of 119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ and internal alterations to first floor flats 1 & 2 to create a single dwelling.

Development Site:
119 High Street, Rushden, Northants, NN10 0NZ



Site •
119 High Street, Rushden, Northants, NN10 0NZ

Report for •
NB Property Holdings Ltd

Document revisions •

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1 The proposed address of this development is 119 High Street, Rushden, Northants, NN10 0NZ.
- 1.2 This design & access statement has been prepared by VJS Projects to provide the local planning authority and others interested in the proposals an explanation of how the various constraints and opportunities, both physical and planning, have steered the design process. The principle, objectives and criteria on which the design is based are described within this document.
- 1.3 The order makes it clear that such statements should set out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.
- 1.4 This statement is in support of a full application, seeking consent to create a proposed conversion and extension of existing store to rear of shops at ground floor & first floor rear extension to create 2no dwellings at the rear of 119 High Street, Rushden, and internal alterations to first floor flats 1 & 2 to create a single dwelling a first-floor.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE, LOCATION & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site currently accommodates two retail units on the Rushden High Street with 1 self-contained maisonette to the rear of the units at ground floor with storage and flats at first floor levels. It is understood that the retail units currently accommodate a beauty therapy business and a tattoo parlour.
- 2.2 The existing elevation of the building is constructed from white painted brick, under a slate roof. Two separate shop fronts form the front ground floor elevation with a first floor above which provides flats and has windows facing the High Street.
- 2.3 Rushden is located between two major strategic Roads – the A45 and A6. The town can be accessed via a number of major arterial roads, including the A5001; A5028 and B569. According to the Rushden Town Local Plan Policies Map North Northants JCS 2011 - 2031, the site is located within the ‘Town Centre Boundary’ (Policy R1, R2, & R3 applies), ‘Settlement Boundary’ and ‘Rushden Parish Boundary’.
- 2.4 119 High Street is not locally or statutory listed neither are any of the properties within the curtilage of the land. The existing building is L-shaped with a main two storey element to the front, facing High Street, and a part single, part two storey rear projection, the land to the rear of the site is also within the Rushden Conservation Area.
- 2.5 This proposal is an opportunity to extend on the existing building to the rear which could greatly enhance the surrounding area, in turn which delivers a much more sympathetic environment and create a residential dwelling in return.
- 2.6 The site is located within the Rushden Conservation Area, the Defined Shopping Frontage and the Defined Shopping Area as defined in Policy R2 of the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan. It is also located within the 5-kilometre buffer of the Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA), and within 2-kilometre buffer of the Upper

Nene Valley Gravel Pits Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Ramsar site. To the north, south and east of the site are a mixture of uses including retail, residential, hairdressing and takeaways; and to the west (rear) is a large outdoor area serving a nearby DIY store.



Figure 1: Red Line Boundary Plan

3. PREVIOUS PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Following a desktop search of Council's public access, a number of applications relevant to the proposed site were identified. The details of these applications are outlined below.

Address	Reference	Description	Decision / Date
Application Site			
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	NE/21/00926/FUL	Conversion and extension of store to the rear of shops at No 119 High Street Rushden to form a single dwelling within Class C3. (resubmission of 20/01654/FUL)	Approved March 2022
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	20/01654/FUL	Conversion and extension of store to the rear of shops at No 119 High Street Rushden to form a single dwelling within Class C3.	Refused June 2021
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	19/00697/FUL	Extension to storage above shop.	Approved Oct 2019
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	18/01710/FUL	Change of use from (A1) shop with (C3) dwellinghouse above to two ground floor shops (A1) incorporating new entrance, with ancillary storage above.	Approved Nov 2018
119A High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	18/00215/FUL	Two residential class C3 first floor extensions to existing self contained flat with associated alterations.	Refused April 2018
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	18/00214/FUL	Two first floor rear extensions over existing retail units to be used as ancillary to the existing retail use.	Refused April 2018
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	17/02150/FUL	Partial change of use from A1 to C3 and a rear extension of the first floor to create a total of four 1 bedroom flats (revised scheme to 17/00569/FUL).	Refused Dec 2017
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	17/01924/LDP	Convert three bedroom flat to 2no two bedroom flats.	Refused Nov 2017
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	17/00569/FUL	Change of use from A1 to C3 and the addition of a third storey to create six residential units.	Refused Aug 2017
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	11/01575/OUT	Outline: 6 No flats - 2 x one bedroom and 4 x two bedroom.	Refused Aug 2012
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	08/02303/OUT	Three storey residential development of 6 flats (4No 2bed 2No 1bed apartments) and associated parking.	Withdrawn April 2009
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	04/01097/FUL	Change of use from commercial to residential.	Approved July 2004
119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ	03/00789/FUL	Refurbishment and alterations to existing office building to provide 4 office suites including construction of external staircase and bicycle storage.	Approved Sep 2003

Figure 2: Site Specific Planning Applications

3.2 Relevant to this application is appeal decision ref. APP/M2840/W/21/3286088 (LPA ref. NE/21/00926/FUL) which was issued in March 2022 and approved permission for the Conversion and extension of store to the rear of shops at No 119 High Street Rushden to form a single dwelling within Class C3. This proposal is of the same aspect forming an extension above this approval.

3.3 The main refusal reasons identified by the council were the effect upon the character and appearance of the area, including consideration of whether or not the proposed development would be likely to promote opportunities for crime, whether or not

acceptable living conditions would be provided for future occupiers of the proposed development, having particular regard to access to light and outlook and the effect upon highway safety and the viability of the town centre, having particular regard to the intended parking arrangements.

- 3.4 Following an appeal, the inspectorate dis-regarded these refusal reasons given by the council and argued that the planned dwelling would occupy a discreet location setback from High Street and, being of low height and small scale, would constitute an inconspicuous addition and the private outdoor space to be provided to the rear would offer a meaningful degree of spaciousness and opportunities for open outlook via multiple intended openings.
- 3.5 Finally, the inspectorate stated that any possible increased reliance upon public car parks and/or on-street parking would be modest and not to an extent that could undermine the viability of town centre businesses. These points identified by the inspectorate have demonstrated that the decision is lawful and would be granted, therefore this sets precedent for this proposed extension to the rear of 119 High Street, giving the same footprint and aspect as the previously approved application in terms of character, outlook, appearance, parking and amenity space which is all provided in this proposal.
- 3.6 No other applications were identified that are considered relevant to the application site or the proposals.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This proposal comprises of a proposed conversion and extension of existing store to rear of shops at ground floor & first floor rear extension to create 2no dwellings at the rear of 119 High Street, Rushden, and internal alterations to first floor flats 1 & 2 to create a single dwelling a first-floor.
- 4.2 The site occupies a dense inner-urban location where a diverse mix of commercial and residential uses already exist. Indeed, the site itself contains a pair of retail units at ground floor as well as multiple flats across its upper floors. A mixed and compact character and appearance is thus readily identifiable local to the site.
- 4.3 This planned dwelling extension would occupy a discreet location setback from High Street and, being of low height and small scale in terms of surrounding buildings, which would constitute an inconspicuous addition. As such, notwithstanding the proximity of various other buildings and the residential units that already exist on-site. It can be argued that the extension is an infill to the existing building, with the same footprint as the ground floor extension that has been previously been approved under ref: **NE/21/00926/FUL**.
- 4.4 The proposed extension would measure approximately 6.25 metres in length by 8.65 metres wide, by 3.45 metres in height. The extension would be set back from the High Street and would be accessed via the semi-covered walkway which has a solid entrance door leading off High Street. Therefore, the extended element of the proposal and the rear of the existing building would not be visible from High Street. Whilst it would be visible from the land to the rear of the site which from the neighbouring DIY store and car park it is not considered that an extension comprising of matching materials with a pitched roof would have a detrimental impact on the wider Conservation Area.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compensation Act 2004 replaces section 54A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and states ***‘that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise’***.
- 5.2 The development plan for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 comprises the North Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 1 1996 (LP); and the emerging Northamptonshire Local Plan Core Strategy (CSS).
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that town centres are at the heart of communities and policies should be produced which support their vitality and viability. It states that local policies should be clear in defining the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas making it clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.
- 5.4 Rushden Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared under the provisions of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act (as amended by the 2011 Localism Act) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. It is intended to guide the future development of the town up to 2031, supporting strategic policies of the Local Plan.
- 5.5 It is acknowledged that paragraph 1.46 of the Rushden neighbourhood plan makes reference to recent housing developments in Rushden have provided a significant number of flatted developments. Future housing should therefore look to provide houses, maisonettes or bungalows rather than more flats. However, the subject site is not suitable for houses or bungalows considering its location within the proximity of the town centre and would not conform with the current street scene along the high street. It is clear that this would not be encouraged as the building is considered to be a positive contribution to the area and the way in which such form of

development would adversely impact on the character of the conversation and surrounding area. In the circumstances, it is considered that in order to comply with other policies, making effective and efficient use of the site and incorporating residential development, that the proposals that are put forward are wholly acceptable. The proposed maisonette complies with Joint Core Strategy Policy 30 and Rushden's Local Neighbourhood Plan in terms of providing a maisonette rather than a flat as noted in paragraph 1.46.

- 5.6 The site is located within policy H1 of the settlement boundary making it clear that such developments will be permitted where it accords with other policies of the Development Plan. Policy H2 is not applicable to this application site, therefore a town centre location such as this is appropriate for a mixed-use development incorporating both residential and retail units within 119 High Street, with both of these being currently present within this curtilage.
- 5.7 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF recognises that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres and encourages residential development on appropriate sites.
- 5.8 Policy 6 of the JCS states that Local Planning Authorities will seek to maximise the delivery of development through the reuse of suitable previously developed land and buildings within the urban area. Both of the retail units to the front of the site are now occupied and do not rely on the ground floor element of the storage facility in order to operate. Although the creation of a maisonette to the rear of the retail units would not benefit the building as a whole, the proposal would nevertheless deliver a small dwelling on a brownfield site which is encourage in the local plan.

- 5.9 Policy 12 of the JCS supports development within town centres and primary shopping areas provided that it does not undermine the predominance of typical town centre uses, such as A1 retail use. The policy also supports residential development above shops which is not relevant in this case as the proposal is for a ground floor flat to the rear of the retail units.
- 5.91 Policy 29 of the JCS broadly supports development within the growth towns and the re- use of previously developed land and buildings.
- 5.92 Policy T2 relates to 'car parking provision' stating that Existing public car parking provision within the town will be protected and retained unless suitable alternative provision is provided (and its delivery secured through condition or legal agreement) or the provision is demonstrated to no longer be required. Where additional demand for parking is identified, applications for new public car parks will be supported. Proposals to improve or enhance existing facilities will also be supported where the proposals would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the area. It is proposed to have no parking within this planning application as the occupiers will be encouraged to either use sustainable modes of travel as outlined in paragraph 5.4 above or make provision for use of the public car park to the rear of the development known as 'John Street' car park which is open 24 hours a day.
- 5.93 The High Street in Rushden only has a single yellow line for a partial parking restriction. To the front of 119 is a disabled bay and a loading bay. Without double yellow lines, there is likely to be an impact on the highway where residents wish to park near to their residence. It is an amenity issue to decide whether residents may park in public car parks. The only public car park within 5 minutes' walk, with 24-hour parking, is John Street which has 102 spaces. The LHA do have concerns with relying on parking spaces which form part of a public car park and that whilst there are currently no restrictions this may not be the case for the lifetime of the development.

- 5.94 The Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016) sets out minimum parking standards for a range of different development types. The expected standard for a one-bedroom dwelling is one vehicular space plus one visitor space. In this case, no off-street parking spaces are intended to be provided.
- 5.93 The Neighbourhood Plan aspires to deliver development that promotes the regeneration of the High Street and surrounding retail frontages to make it a more attractive retail environment. As part of improvements to the town, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure there is an appropriate mix of uses to support the night time economy.
- 5.94 Policy R1 relates to ‘town centre uses’ stating new development proposals for main town centre uses (as defined by the NPPF) will be supported where a site falls within the Town Centre area as defined on the Policies Map and causes no harm to amenity. This development site falls within this curtilage and has been designed in a way to confirm with all paragraphs outlined within Policy R1 such as improving visual appearance, promote active and quality building frontages, provide visual interest and overall help improve footfall to the interest of passers-by. It is considered that as the proposal would not be visible from the High Street or wider Conservation Area and would not have an impact on the shop front, that the proposal accords with Policy R1 of the RNP.
- 5.95 Policy 30 of the JCS states that development should reflect the need to accommodate smaller households with an emphasis on small and medium sized dwellings (1-3 bedrooms). As the application is for a single one-bedroom property, it is considered to meet this criterion. However, taken in context with the works that have been carried out on the first floor of the building through the conversion of the first floor to 4 no. one bedroom flats, the building as a whole does not provide a mix of house types or sizes.

- 5.96 Policy 30 of the JCS also sets out that the internal floor area of new dwellings must meet the National Space Standards as a minimum in order to provide residents with adequate floor space for basic furnishings, storage and activities. The National Space Standards state that the requirement in terms of floorspace for a 1 bedroom, 1 person unit is 37m². The standards also state that this must include a minimum of 1m² of built-in storage. The proposed maisonette would just comply with the minimum standards.
- 5.97 The proposed maisonette would benefit from a private outdoor amenity area to its west, and although relatively small, this would provide future occupiers with an outdoor space to use for recreation and drying clothes. This would comply with the requirements of Policy 8 (e) (vi) of the NNJCS.
- 5.98 Access to the proposed maisonette would be via a dark alleyway to the side of No.119 High Street with a metal staircase rising to the first floor of the building. This would not be welcoming and would not make for a pleasant place to enter a home. This was included as a refusal reason for the previous and identical scheme, however, the Planning Inspector considered this to be acceptable and suggested that suitable lighting could be secured by condition within that application.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This design & access Statement has been prepared on behalf of NB Property Holdings Ltd to support a full planning application seeking consent to create a proposed conversion and extension of existing store to rear of shops at ground floor & first floor rear extension to create 2no dwellings at the rear of 119 High Street, Rushden, and internal alterations to first floor flats 1 & 2 to create a single dwelling a first-floor.
- 6.2 The proposed development will provide real benefits to the vitality of the High Street and the increased use of residential dwellings within an urban area. The support for town centre uses is expressed within the core strategy and the neighbourhood plan (Policy R3). Additionally, the neighbourhood plan expresses support for residential use on first and upper floors in the town centre and as such the proposal will provide smaller units in a highly sustainable location, adding to the vitality of the town centre.
- 6.3 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its access, outlook, appearance and scale taking into account its location and the mixed use of the building. In particular the site currently holds 5 one-bedroom dwellings which all meet space standards and in turn sets precedent for this application proposal.
- 6.4 The proposal has been assessed against the planning policy context and has been found to be in accordance with National and Local planning policies and guidance. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF therefore applies. Taking all matters into account, the development provides real economic, social and heritage benefits and as such should be supported.