

Planning Statement

On Behalf of Saint Construct

Conversion of former Class E office to residential comprising two dwellings. Internal alterations and landscape works.

12-14 Tavern Street, Stowmarket

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	Contents	Page
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	The Site and Surroundings	2
3.0	Planning History	2
4.0	The Proposals	3
5.0	Planning Policy Framework	3
6.0	Material Considerations	4

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Saint Construct in support of a planning and listed building application for the change of use of former offices (Class E use) to two dwellings. The proposed development also includes the formalisation of the landscaping to the rear to provide shared amenity space and car parking / manoeuvring. The property in question is that of 12 and 14 Tavern Street, a semi-detached, two-storey, grade II listed building.
- 1.2 This report describes the proposals and the planning history of the site. It outlines planning policy relevant to the proposal and explores the material planning considerations. Specifically, the application will demonstrate what efforts have been made to ensure the development proposal complies with development plan policies.
- 1.3 This statement is supported by planning drawings and a heritage assessment. In accordance with the Council's local validation list, no further surveys are necessary to enable the determination of this application.
- 1.4 The application is submitted as a direct response to the refusal of DC/23/01629/LBC and DC/23/01628/FUL, the description of development being "*Change of use from B1 to C3, Sub-divide and convert existing properties to form 2No. residential units including single storey rear extension (following removal of conservatory) including landscaping and provision of parking*". The reasons for refusal, and the applications ability to overcome them, are detailed further in this statement.

2.0 The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site takes the form of a pair of two-storey semi-detached grade II listed buildings. Accompanying this application is a heritage statement that provides a concise breakdown and identification of the heritage asset. To the rear of the site is a large area of land forming its curtilage. This land has not been maintained and as such is not formalised. It contains areas of hardstanding a tree, the subject of a preservation order.
- 2.2 Surrounding uses comprise a mix of employment to the east and residential to the west along Tavern Street, although the general character is more of a mixed use. In relation to the adopted local plan, the site is within a conservation area and outside of the principle shopping area of Stowmarket.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 In 2000 permission was granted under application reference 1223/99 for the change of use of former court house building to residential use. More recent applications include the following:
- 3.2 DC/23/01628 - Full Planning Application - Change of use from B1 to C3, Sub-divide and convert existing properties to form 2No. residential units including single storey rear extension (following removal of conservatory) including landscaping and provision of parking.
- 3.3 DC/23/01629 - Application For Listed Building Consent - Works to facilitate change of use from B1 to C3, Sub-divide and convert existing properties to 2No. residential units and erection of rear single storey extension (following demolition of conservatory) as per schedule of works.

4.0 The Proposal

- 4.1 Planning and Listed Building Consent is required for the conversion of the two former offices to residential. Minimal alterations are proposed internally. To the rear of the building a more recent lean-to extension is to be demolished.
- 4.2 To the rear the areas of hardstanding will be used for associated parking, as it is at present. Remaining land will comprise shared amenity space.

5.0 Planning Policy

- 5.1 Planning applications are required by S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) contains the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation of the NPPF.
- 5.3 The development plan for Mid Suffolk District Council consists of the Joint Local Plan. Relevant policies are as follows:

Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998

- SP09 - Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- LP19 - The Historic Environment
- LP24 - Design and Residential Amenity

6.0 Material Considerations

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The previously submitted scheme for the site sought the conversion and extension of the building into four flats. This was subsequently amended to convert the building into two dwellings, with extensions. Despite extensive discussions with the Council, a scheme could not be mutually agreed and the application was subsequently refused. However, the reason for refusal was on grounds of the proposed extensions, not the internal conversion works. The refusal read as follows:

“The proposed single storey rear extension would obscure views of the historic rear elevation at ground floor level; furthermore, by way of its step back at Unit 2, it would result in a clumsy appearance that would further erode the appearance of the designated heritage asset. In addition, the subdivision of the rear garden space would also undermine the historic use, status and experience of the host building.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of 12-14 Tavern Street. In accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, there are no public benefits which materialise from the proposal to outweigh the harm to the aforementioned heritage asset.

The proposal is therefore contrary to policy LP19 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, and Paragraphs 199, 200, 201 and 202 of the NPPF. Accordingly, the application is recommended for refusal for these reasons.”

- 6.2 This application seeks to simply remove the previously proposed extensions and allow the conversion to two dwellings. The proposed internal works remain almost identical to those provided in the previous application, upon which there was no objection. The existing lean-to rear projection, which is a later addition and in a dilapidated state of repair, will simply be removed.
- 6.3 In respect of the amenity space for the two dwellings, there is limited scope for its composition whilst realising garden spaces that are functional. We believe, following the removal for the previously proposed extensions, that the garden and patio areas function adequately without causing harm to the setting of the listed building. Should the Council wish

for a reconfiguration the applicant has no objection to being provided with an alternate design. However, we believe the proposed garden compositions do not result in a material harm.