

Design and Access Statement
&
Heritage Statement

Proposed Non Material Amendments
at
The Old Chapel
No. 4 Union Street, Wells
BA5 2PU

Date:
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Applicant:
Mr D Wise

Agent:
Gabriela Roberts Architecture

Email: gabrielaroberts@hotmail.com

1. Introduction:

The application site is The Old Chapel building, on Union Street, in the centre of Wells. It is currently a mixed unit building with residential apartments on the first floor and commercial units on the ground floor.

A recent application (Ref: 2023/0096/FUL) for change of use from Commercial (E) to Residential (C3) has been granted Approval.

This Non Material Amendment application wishes to cover:

- The conversion of the original GF of The Old Chapel Building into 4 residential units, while still retaining the original envelope, which will be sympathetically adapted and thermally upgraded to suit.

By retaining the original envelope, which is in good structural condition, the overall environmental impact of the development is considerably reduced.

2. Location and Site:

The site is located within the Conservation Area of Wells, on Union Street.

It has three 'fronting' elevations, the East Elevation fronting Union Street, the West elevation fronts the public car park and the South Elevation fronts the public footpath between Union Street and the car park.



Google Street View of Site



Google Aerial View of site

3. Planning History:

The property got approval in 2004 to convert the the first floor from office to a Cafe/Bar (application reference 049099/005).

In 2016 the property gained Planning Approval to convert the first floor from A3 Commercial use to two C3 Residential units (application reference 2016/1206).

In 2018 approval was gained to convert one half of the ground floor (ref: 2018/2777/FULL) into a residential unit.

December 2023 approval has been granted for change of use from Commercial (E) to Residential (C3) (Ref: 2023/0096/FUL).

4. Pre-application advice:

A pre-application advice was held with case Officer Lindsey Bradshaw on 18th May 2016 in advance of the application Ref 2016/1206. The following policies were highlighted as being pertinent to the site and the proposal:

Core Policies:

CP1 – Mendip Spatial Strategy

CP2 – Supporting the provision of New Housing

CP10 – Wells
Development Policies:

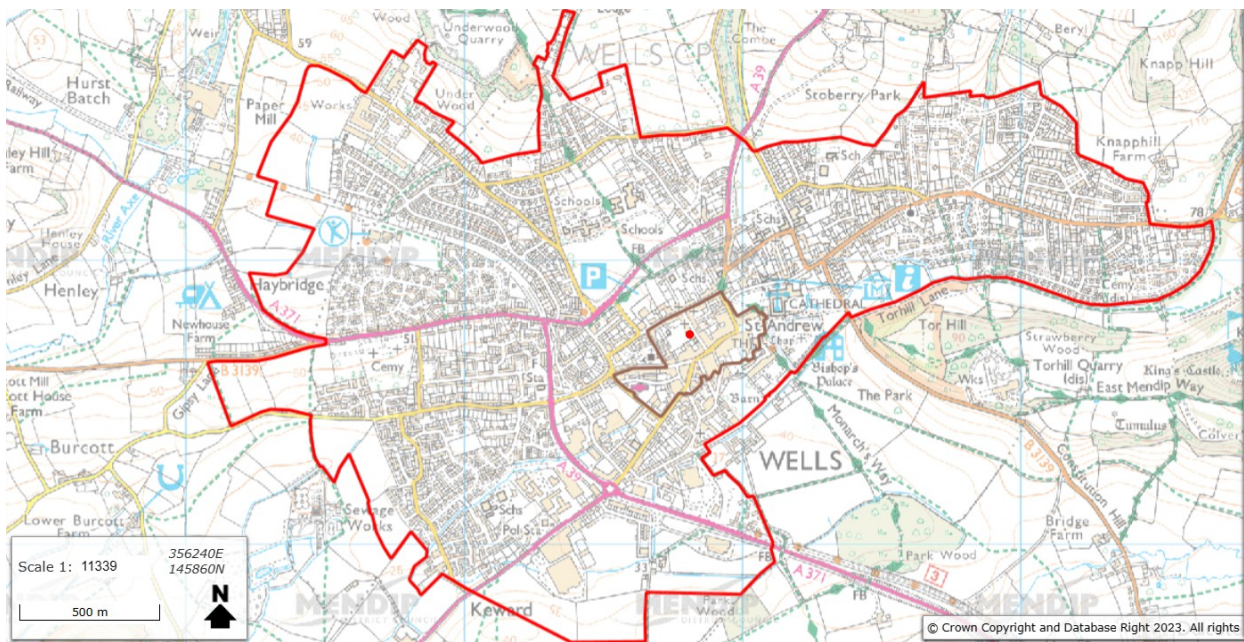
- DP3 – Heritage Conservation
- DP7 – Design and Amenity
- DP8 – Environmental Protection
- DP21 – Managing Town Centre Usage

The case officer was of the opinion that the conversion of the commercial unit into a dwelling would not directly contravene any Adopted Local Plan policies and that as long as Design and technical standards were met, the application would most likely be viewed favourably and recommended for approval.

As the current application is a 'follow up' on the approved schemes Ref 2016/1206 and Ref: 2023/0096/FUL, we believe that the above policies would be relevant to this application and thereby it is hoped that the current application would also be seen favourably.

5. Wells and The Conservation Area:

The site is within Wells Conservation Area. Marked in Brown on the map below.



Mendip District Council – Adopted Local Plan

Wells is a small historic city with an impressive collection of listed buildings concentrated in a compact city centre area, which is also the main commercial area of the city.

Records of Wells as a town dates back from the early 12th Century, but its fortune changed mid century, when Bishop Robert of Lewes started rebuilding the Wells Cathedral, which turned out to be a building of National importance, together with The Vicar's Close and the Bishop's Palace.

Residential buildings, mostly dated from the 19th Century constitutes most of the conservation area outside the main commercial area.

Although officially known as England's smallest city, Wells still has a bustling market town feel and is a popular touristic location.

The preservation and enhancement of the conservation area is covered by the Mendip Development Framework (LDF), 'Core Strategy' 10 (CP10) for Wells.

Union Street is within Character area 2: New Street and Chamberlain Street (East). The area, specially Chamberlain St and New St. is characterised by listed buildings.

The Old Chapel buildings is not listed, although it offers an important contribution to the street character, being one of the few buildings in the traditional reddish-grey stone.

Union St. is a narrow pedestrianized street which links Chamberlain St to the High St. to the south. It also provides vehicular access to the Union Street car park.

The architecture of Union Street is characterized by back of pavement, two storey buildings, a combination of residential with ground floor commercial units, in reddish-grey stone or render finish.

6. Building usage:

The property is in close proximity of the main shopping area, but situated in a mainly residential area.

The approved change of use application (Ref: 2023/0096/FUL), has confirmed that converting the empty commercial space into residential units would be beneficial, providing new homes in the area and helping to revive the High Street.

The new scheme makes a better use of the existing area and provides two extra units, without compromising on the quality of the internal layouts.

Smaller units, will be better suited for the prospective young buyers working or studying in the city centre.

7. Proposed Design:

The intention is to convert the existing ground floor, currently 2 commercial units into 4 micro units (2Nos. 1 Bed Apartments and 2Nos. Studio Apartments, aimed at the 'first time buyers' market.

Sustainability is in the core of the proposed design. The intention is to retain the existing fabric as existing with the appropriate level of thermal upgrade done internally. This way, there will be minimum waste and the least impact to the character of the conservation area.

The glazed elevation is to be retained, where possible, with new windows fitted to specific locations, as shown on plans. Secondary glazing fitted internally to thermal upgrade the fabric. The access doors are proposed in traditional six panel traditional style to match the doors into the existing first floor apartments. Frames to be painted grey.

The apartments layouts aims to appeal to the young market, providing flexibility and efficiency in a integrated and yet well defined spaces.

The studio spaces have the social spaces (kitchen and living spaces) at the front where most of the light source is concentrated. The bedrooms are located at the back, still part of the space, but yet separate.

The one bed apartments, have bedrooms at the back with new windows opening directly into them, they are physically separated from the other areas of the apartment.

We believe that the proposed units will meet the local need for affordable units, for first time buyers, which could then supply the need for workmanship in the area as established by the Mendip District Council: Local Plan.

Wells	1452-1594	Acute affordable housing need Many jobs, but lower level of economically active people Strong economic potential Risk of harm to important city character	1,450
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TABLE 6: Summary of the exercise used to determine local housing targets

8. Refuse Storage and Collection:

The property will be provided with the standard black Willie bin for general waste and recycling boxes, which will be kept in secure bin stores, as shown on dwgs.

9. Access:

Access to the new Units 2 and 3 will be via front doors in exactly the same position as the current shop and restaurant entrances. Entrances to Unit1 and 4 were created on the front and rear elevations, as shown on drawings.

10. Parking:

The site is of sustainable nature, it is expected that the new residents will work locally and use public transport. Nonetheless, the applicant has the ownership of two of the parking spaces located off union Street. The intention is to allocate them to Unit 1 and 4.

The property is adjacent to the Union Street Car Park, which can provide over the clock parking options for the residents of the studio units if ever necessary and to any potential visitors to the site.

11. Sustainability Appraisal:

The proposed scheme took in consideration the guidelines set in the Mendip Climate Action-District-Wide Carbon Management Plan.

It is our intention to meet the Part L requirements, current at the time of construction. We are committed to construct a building with a highly thermal efficient envelope and suitably fitted with energy efficient appliances and systems.

The proposed Sustainability Strategy for the site is to achieve at least the recommended Carbon Dioxide emissions reduction from the residual energy used in the building.

11.1. Energy Efficiency

The proposed scheme aim to retain and thermally upgrade the original fabric to meet the latest Building Standards and the recommended EPC rating for the building.

The proposed units will be efficiently ventilated and with good level of daylight.

11.2. Heating

A modern, efficient electric boiler is to be used for hot water and central heating. Rooms are of appropriate size and will be fitted with wall-mounted radiators (sized by registered installer) with thermostatic valves to ensure the most efficient system possible.

11.3. Water

Bathroom will be installed with 'low water usage' fittings, duo flush Wcs to comply with AD Part G. All sinks to be fitted with spray taps and restrictor flows.

11.4. Materials

All materials to be sourced locally and rated A or B in accordance to the BRE Green Guide to Specification, where possible.

Water based paints will be used, reducing chemical pollution.

11.5. Flexibility and Adaptability

The intention to retain the original fabric and adapt it for the new use, will permit the building to be flexible again in the future, if circumstances change.

The proposed new units with open plan layouts also allow itself for flexible and personalised use.