

DESIGN HERITAGE ACCESS

Proposed change of use of ground floor former retail shop area known as 'Harveys Newsagents and Tobacconists' to be integrated within existing dwelling occupying ground, lower ground and first floor levels of the same property at 7 Bond Street, Redruth TR15 2QA Revision A [26/03/2024]

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Constraints:

World Heritage Site.

Redruth Conservation Area.

Air Quality Management Area.

Zone of Influence Natura 2000.

Description:

Please read in conjunction with drawings No. 1273/A3/01, /02 + /03.



Application Site:

The application site comprises a former retail shop unit known as 'Harveys Newsagents and Tobacconists', located within Bond Street, Redruth. The major portion of the property is used as the applicants dwelling and the retail shop, closed since 2022, occupies a relatively small portion of the whole property being confined to part of the ground floor only. The property includes an attractive timber and glass double shopfront onto Bond Street either side of a central, recessed doorway. Bond Street is a well-known shopping street within the town and includes an organic food shop, hairdressers and dentist. In recent years retail has been in decline and Bond Street has witnessed the loss of a card and art shop, an opticians and since 2022, Harveys Newsagents and Tobacconists.

The demand for retail space is in decline with many vacant premises available to rent / purchase within the town. The retail space associated with this application is restricted in size and, because it is physically integrated into the use of the major portion of the property as a dwelling, it is not ideally suited to be sub-let. The applicant / owners of the property have lived at 7 Bond Street for many years and wish to remain in their home. The unused former retail area is to be used as a living room and bedroom integrated into the existing residential use.

Proposed Development:

The applicant seek consent to change the use of the redundant former retail area to residential use integrated into the existing dwelling. The proposal will retain the existing timber and glass shopfront unaltered. The access door will be secured in a closed position. A new timber framed insulated wall will be constructed at the inside face of the existing stone walls to enclose the new living room space. New opening panels will be installed within this wall in order to access the shopfront for cleaning and maintenance and an existing window vent will be retained for fresh air ventilation into the room. The room at the rear will be used as an additional bedroom for the dwelling.

The low-impact nature of the proposed works will remain reversible should there be a demand for Town centre retail space in the future.

In response to Cornwall Council's commitment to the Climate Emergency, the work will improve the insulation value of the existing building fabric, reducing heat loss through the existing single glazed, draughty shopfront.

Heritage Impact:

The application site exists within Redruth Conservation Area and is within the World Heritage Site Area designation.

The property could be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. The shopfront in particular is an important feature that contributes to the value of the conservation area and WHS. The application proposes internal alterations only to achieve a change of use of the minor portion of the property devoted to former retail use to be brought into residential use integral to the major portion of the property which functions as a dwelling. The proposed alterations would be fully reversible should the demand for Town centre retail use return in the future.

Given that there will be no physical changes to the external of the property – the Bond Street shopfront will be retained – then there cannot be any impact on the setting of the Conservation Area or on the World Heritage site.

Planning Policy:

The principle in support of change of use of former retail use to residential use within Bond Street has already been established through the approval of planning application PA21/07090 for the change of use of No. 6 Bond Street from retail to 2No. residential flats.

The planning officers report included the following comment:

“Section 7 of the NPPF 2021 states that planning decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of the community and take a positive approach to their growth, management and adaption.

A recent change to use classes includes the amalgamation of a number of previously separate use classes into the now Class E use class. In response to this the Council has produced a Chief Planning Officer's Advice Note titled 'Residential Uses in Town Centres' to provide clarity on planning changes and to guide greater consistency when making planning decisions. This Note acknowledges National Governments direction of travel set by the new rights and the flexibility to be allowed. As this site falls within the World Heritage Site the changes could not be considered under permitted development however the Officer Note states the following:

"Proposals for change of use/conversion that require planning permission will still take into account Policy 4 of the Cornwall Local Plan, however the Government's direction of travel for high street uses is clearly intended to relax the controls in place and to encourage a mix of uses. It effectively means that there is now almost complete flexibility of uses within high streets. Where the Local plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to limit the mix of uses in town centres it would be sensible and reasonable to have regard and give greater weight to the direction of travel and flexibility of uses that is provided by Class E and the new Class MA rights."

The building/site appears to have not been used for a commercial use recently and are currently redundant and in a generally poor state. The scheme seeks to reuse the building/site in order to provide much needed housing and therefore given National Government direction of travel and Cornwall Council position for schemes such as this the principle is considered acceptable in this particular instance.”

The minor part of No7 Bond Street has been unused since 19/08/2022 – a period of 18 months. There is no current interest in the retail element of the property and, if there had been, the practicalities of implementing the changes necessary to achieve a fire and sound proof separation between the retail and residential uses in different occupation would be prohibitively costly. The logical solution is to allow the former retail use to be absorbed into the existing dwelling as desired by the applicants. The shopfront will remain unaltered and that the works would be fully reversible in future – there will be no negative impact attributed to the application.

Access:

The application site is located within the town of Redruth.

There is easy and direct level pedestrian access into Redruth Town from the application site and direct and easy pedestrian access to local bus and train services which connect to other towns and cities within Cornwall and beyond.

The change of use will be carried out in accordance with all building regulations approved documents that might be relevant at the time of construction.

Conclusion:

The application accords with planning policy within the adopted Cornwall Local Plan, there are no identifiable adverse effects on the nearby Redruth Conservation Area or on the World Heritage Site Status, therefore the application should be supported.