

# Design, Access and Heritage Assessment

March 2024

58/60 High Street, Newmarket

LOUNGERS  
Turley

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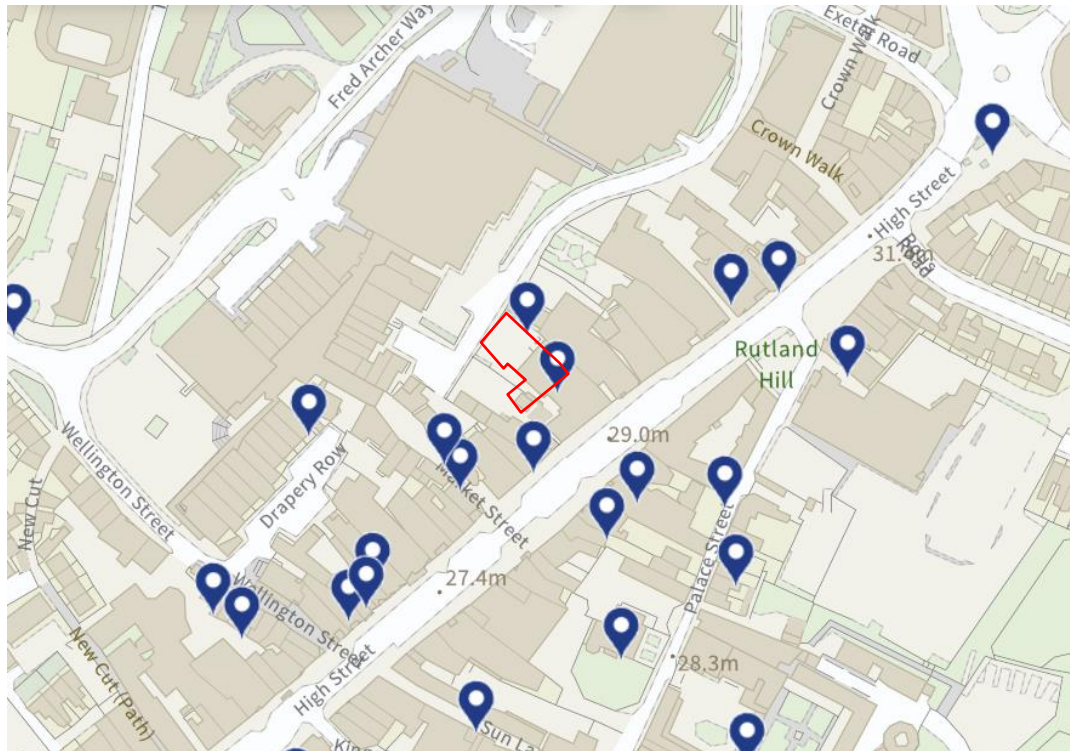
Loungers

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Design, Access and Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Turley on behalf of Loungers UK Limited ('Loungers'). It accompanies a planning and listed building consent application submitted on behalf of Loungers in respect of 58/60 High Street, Newmarket.
- 1.2 The application seeks consent for minor external alterations for the installation of plant and extract equipment, as well as the internal fit out to accommodate a Loungers café/bar and restaurant.
- 1.3 Loungers successfully operate over 200 sites across the country through two brands, Loungers and Cosy Club. The Lounges are located in either suburbs or market towns and are run as café/bar/restaurants, offering food from 09:00 until 22:30. Alcohol is also available from 10:30, however comprises a smaller proportion of total sales than food. Loungers floated on the AIM Market in April 2019, and thus hold a PLC Covenant.
- 1.4 The Lounges are all uniquely designed, with an emphasis on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for families (as well as four legged friends). The aim of every Lounge is to tie in with local customers, so that they can make of the Lounge what they will; whether a customer wants to come in for a coffee after dropping children to school, a working lunch, or a tittle after work, Lounges can provide an environment for all these purposes.
- 1.5 As well as these everyday activities, each site will be tied in with local charities and initiatives. For example, during the pandemic, a number of Lounge sites opened up to make food packages for local shelters and schools. Also, they will run reading groups, young mum's support groups, Christmas initiatives as well as a number of others.
- 1.6 Each new site will generate in the region of 30 new jobs for the local community across a variety of roles – from leadership positions to front of house staff. These staff will also have available to them a very high standard of training with regards to health and safety, licensing etc which will help prepare them for other positions in the future. This is in addition to providing the best customer service available; Lounges work through creating the desire for customers to come multiple times per month, as opposed to just a special event.
- 1.7 Leases are for 15 years, so they invest very wisely and in high-quality goods for every one of their sites; they are designed to last. Lounge's history extends back to 2002, they have only closed six sites in total, the majority of which were legacy sites that were just too small for current offer and customer demand. Based on current proposals, the conversion of this property will represent an investment cost of approximately £1million. Thus, not only do Lounges create jobs for their own business, they can assist in creating an employment draw for a much wider area, across both retail and hospitality

## 2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site lies within Newmarket, a market town in West Suffolk. The site extends to 608.8 sqm and comprises a 2-storey redbrick building which was formerly occupied by Barclays Bank.
- 2.2 The site is bound by High Street to the south and properties adjoin the site on its north, east and western sides. The premises is surrounded by uses typical of a market town including a pharmacy, hairdresser, retail stores, café and restaurants. The location is shown on the accompanying Site Location Plan.
- 2.3 The site is within a sustainable and accessible location and benefits from being located within proximity to public transport links. Furthermore, established pedestrian and vehicular access routes surround the site.
- 2.4 The site is not allocated for any particular use and is not covered by any environmentally constrained. A review of the Environment Agency's Flood Map confirms that the site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and as such is at the lowest risk of flooding.
- 2.5 The premises is Grade II Listed (Listing ID: 1037651) and is situated within the Newmarket Conservation Area. There are several other heritage assets within the sites immediate vicinity which include:
- Grade II Listed - House at rear of numbers 58 and 60 (Barclays Bank) (Listing ID: 1037652) which immediately adjoins the property on its northern side.
  - Grade Listed II - The Bull Public House (Listing ID: 1193890) which is located approximately 10m to the west.
  - Grade II Listed - 35 and 37 High Street (Listing ID: 1037659) which is located approximately 22m to the south.
  - Grade II Listed - 43 to 47 High Street (Listing ID: 1285897) which is located approximately 32m to the south.
  - Grade II Listed – Rutland Arms Hotel (Listing ID: 1193987) which is located 32m to the southeast.
  - Grade II Listed – Numbers 3 and 4 (Southeast Part) Market Street (Listing ID: 1037625) which is located approximately 50m to the west.
  - Grade II Listed – Numbers 5 and 6 (Northwest Part) Market Street (Listing ID: 1351315) which is located approximately 50m to the west.
- 2.6 In addition to the features listed above, there are several other Listed properties which are mainly covered by Grade II and Grade II\* designations. Please refer to Figure 2.1 below. The blue markers indicate the listed features.



**Figure 2.1: Map showing the historical assets within the area (Source: Historic England).**

- 2.7 The property was formerly known as Buckingham House. The 3-storey property was constructed in the mid-1800s. The property's façade is red/brown brick with sash windows with flat arches. The property has a plaintiled roof with hipped plaintiled dormers and small pane sashes. It also has gable chimneys of red brick.
- 2.8 The premises is of red brick construction and is cast by stone detailing which surrounds the windows and main entranceway. A pair of 3-panelled entrance doors with architrave and oblong fanlight provides access to the building from the limestone steps.
- 2.9 The 2-storey annex to the left (No. 60) has 2 windows on the ground floor and in the attics, which was altered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The entrance doorway is identical to that of No. 58.

**Figure 2.2: Front elevation 58/60 High Street**



**Figure 2.3: Rear elevation of 58/60 High Street**



- 2.10 The interior of the building comprises a former ground floor banking hall. The building has been recently renovated externally and internally (ref. DC/23/0645/LB), including alterations such as the removal of a counter, furniture, equipment, stud partitions, glazed screens and doors.

**Figure 2.4: Interior of 58/60 High Street**



- 2.11 For further details of the internal and external listed features, please refer to the Statutory Listing document which is included within **Appendix 2**.

### 3. Planning History

3.1 A review of the Council's online planning search facility indicates that the premises has been subject of numerous planning applications for both internal and external alterations.

3.2 The most relevant approved applications have been summarised below:

- **Planning Ref. DC/23/0645/LB.** Application for listed building consent comprising the removal of signage on front and rear elevations, including removal of ATM and making good with matching brickwork and internal alterations including removal of counter, furniture, equipment, stud partitions / glazed screens and doors. Approved (July 2023).
- **Planning Ref. DC/23/0644/FUL.** Removal of signage on front and rear elevations, including removal of ATM and making good with matching brickwork. Approved (July 2023).
- **Planning Ref. F/2008/0375/LBC.** Installation of new ATM light and CCTV camera on front elevation. Approved (July 2008).
- **Planning Ref. F/2008/0090/ADI.** Display of replacement internally illuminated individual letter signs and projecting sign on the front elevation. Display of internally illuminated individual letter signs on rear elevation. Approved (April 2008).
- **Planning Ref. F/2007/1013/LBC.** Internal alterations to ground floor to provide additional customer facing areas. Approved (January 2008).



## 4. Planning Policy Context

### The Local Development Plan

- 4.1 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this application is considered against the Development Plan for the area which comprises the West Suffolk Local Plan (consisting of the former Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury areas) (adopted in May and December 2010) and the Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (made in February 2020).
- 4.2 The Local Plans for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury are the policy backgrounds against which planning decisions are determined. The Joint Development Management Policies Document (adopted February 2015) is used in day-to-day planning decisions across both areas, in line with each Council's adopted Core Strategy.
- 4.3 Other material considerations include the Council's Joint Development Management Policies Document (adopted February 2015), Supplementary Planning Guidance, National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 4.4 The relevant policy position and considerations in respect of the application are considered further under the relevant headings below.

### Forest Heath Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan

- 4.5 The Forest Heath Local Development Framework was adopted in May 2010. Newmarket sits within the Forest Heath area.
- 4.6 Vision 2 confirms that Newmarket will remain the largest town in the district. It will have been positioned and promoted further as both a destination for tourists and businesses, and as a hub from which the rich and distinct historic context of the district, its cultural attractions and environment can be enjoyed.
- 4.7 **Policy CS 1 (Spatial Strategy)** confirms Newmarket's role and function as a market town serving the retail and leisure needs of the local catchment area.
- 4.8 **Policy CS 5 (Design Quality and Local Distinctiveness)** confirms that new development should be designed to a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness.
- 4.9 **Policy CS 6 (Sustainable Economic and Tourism Development)** confirms that job growth will be achieved via the provision of employment land, as well as policies for tourism, leisure, retail and the rural economy.
- 4.10 **Policy CS 11 (Retail and Town Centre Strategy)** states that support will be given to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Newmarket.

### West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document

- 4.11 The West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document was adopted in February 2015.

- 4.12 **Policy DM1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)** confirms that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.13 **Policy DM2 (Creating Places - Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness)** sets out the criteria for new development, including recognising and addressing the key features, characteristics, landscape/townscape character, local distinctiveness of an area and/or building.
- 4.14 **Policy DM14 (Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards)** confirms that proposals for all new developments should minimise all emissions and other forms of pollution (including light and noise pollution) and ensure no deterioration to either air or water quality.
- 4.15 **Policy DM15 (Listed Buildings)** confirms the criteria by which applications that affect listed buildings will be determined.
- 4.16 **Policy DM17 (Conservation Areas)** confirms the criteria by which applications that affect listed buildings will be determined.
- 4.17 **Policy DM18 (New Uses for Historic Building)** confirms that the adaptation of a historic building to sustain a new use will be permitted where the proposal will protect the special significance of the building and would not have a detrimental impact on the criteria set out in the policy.
- 4.18 **Policy DM21 (Enabling Development)** sets out the criteria that must be met when enabling development that would secure the future of a listed building or other heritage asset but would contravene other policies or objectives elsewhere in this Plan or other adopted Local Plans.
- 4.19 **Policy DM35 (Proposals for Main Town Centre Uses)** states that support will be given, subject to compliance with other policies, to proposals for main town centre uses such as food and drink uses.
- 4.20 **Policy DM36 (Local Centres)** confirms that the local planning authority will seek to maintain a mix of uses in local centres which could include leisure and recreation.
- 4.21 **Policy DM38 (Shop Fronts and Advertisements)** confirms that proposals to alter an existing shop front or create a new shop front, including the installation of external security measures, advertisements or canopies, or advertisements proposed in any other location, must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building or location of which it forms a part.

### **Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan**

- 4.22 The Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan was made in February 2020. The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan include promoting and maintaining the character and prosperity of Newmarket and creating a vibrant, attractive town centre which enhances Newmarket as a major tourist destination.

- 4.23 **Policy NKT1 (Traditional Features and Materials for Developments within the Conservation Area)** confirms that proposals for new development within the designated conservation area should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the designated Newmarket Conservation Area.
- 4.24 **Policy NKT2 (Key Views)** states that development proposals in the Conservation Area should take account of and where possible complement the views and glimpses identified in the Newmarket Conservation Area Appraisal (2009), which contribute to the appreciation of the visual qualities of the Conservation Area and its valued surrounding landscape.

### **Other Material Considerations**

#### **West Suffolk Local Plan Update**

- 4.25 The Emerging West Suffolk Local Plan is currently under review and the Regulation 19 consultation took place from January to March 2024. The Local Plan review is not a material consideration for this planning application given the timescales of the application.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

- 4.26 The revised NPPF was updated in September 2023 and has replaced all previous Government Planning Policy.
- 4.27 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied in decision taking and plan making. It does not form part of the statutory development plan but does provide a framework of policy guidance for local authorities.
- 4.28 The NPPF is clear that the planning system should positively embrace sustainable development to deliver economic growth necessary and the housing needed to create inclusive and mixed communities. Local planning authorities are encouraged in the Framework to approach decisions on proposed developments in a positive and creative way and should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (**paragraph 38**).
- 4.29 **Paragraph 120** of the NPPF promotes and supports the development of underutilised building.
- 4.30 **Paragraph 126** of the NPPF confirms the importance of good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. In accordance with this, **Paragraph 130** states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
  - Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate change.

- 4.31 Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out principles to ensure that the historic environment is conserved and enhanced.
- 4.32 **Paragraph 195** requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.33 **Paragraph 199** states when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

#### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

- 4.34 The NPPG expands on the high-level policy framework of the NPPF by setting out detailed guidance. This includes details relating to supporting development that seeks to deliver economic benefits and also in relation to heritage assets.

#### **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**

- 4.35 Given the proposals affect designated heritage assets, it is also necessary to consider the legal requirements of the above, and in particular Section 66(1) and Section 72, which states:

*“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

- 4.36 Section 72 states that:

*“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”*

## 5. The Proposal

- 5.1 The proposal seeks Planning and Listed Building Consent for the internal fit out of the property at 58 – 60 High Street to facilitate a Lounge restaurant, as described at the beginning of this statement.
- 5.2 The internal fit out is shown on the submitted plans and no changes are proposed to the internal listed features. The applicant operates from many listed buildings throughout the country and always seek to retain as much of the historic fabric as possible. In doing this, the building will be sensitively repaired and redecorated to be reflective of its heritage.
- 5.3 The existing modern partitions are to be removed and new partitions are to be installed to create functional rooms such as the bar and restaurant area, toilets, kitchen area, cellar and a comms room. The newly constructed walls will comprise of studs. Both sides of the walls will be finished with plasterboard and skin.
- 5.4 The existing entrance way and doors will be retained. A new lobby and outward opening door leaf will be installed for accessibility and fire escape purposes.
- 5.5 No additional floor space is proposed nor provided. No change of use is required. Loungers trade as a Class E(b) use.
- 5.6 No changes are proposed to the front façade on the building and as such the prominent features will be retained.
- 5.7 The application seeks approval for the installation of new ventilation systems on the roof of the modern extension to the rear (as shown on the plans).
- 5.8 The full details of the scheme can be found in the pack of architectural plans submitted with the application. No works are proposed to the basement level.

## 6. Assessment

### Principle of development

- 6.1 The site is located within Newmarket where new retail, commercial and community development is focused. The proposals are considered to be consistent with the role and function of Newmarket as a Market Town as well as the surrounding uses. It is therefore considered that the principle of the internal and external alterations to the existing building to allow for its operation as a restaurant and bar is considered to be necessary and acceptable.
- 6.2 The proposals will generate employment and will contribute to the surrounding economy in accordance with the objectives of the Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan. The proposals will improve Newmarket's role as a retail and service centre in accordance with Local Plan Policy CS 11.

### Design

- 6.3 The design of the proposals has been carefully considered to mitigate against any potential harm to the character of the property. The overall architectural quality of the building will be maintained and wherever possible enhanced. To ensure that the proposals do not adversely impact the appearance of the building, no works are proposed to the front elevation in accordance with development management policies DM15 and DM18.
- 6.4 No major external alterations are proposed however, minor alterations are required for the installation of extract equipment on the flat roof to the rear. These amendments will not be located on the listed parts of the building and instead will be situated on the modern extension. The units be hidden from public viewpoints and as such are not considered to be visually harmful to the Newmarket Conservation Area or the surrounding heritage assets.
- 6.5 Careful consideration has been given to the proposals to ensure that the building is retains its distinctive features and is in keeping with the local area and adjacent heritage assets. The proposals do not seek the addition of floor space and so the scale, form and layout of the premises has been retained and remains compatible with the surrounding buildings.

### Heritage

- 6.6 National policy encourages the reuse of existing historic buildings in accessible and sustainable locations. The proposed development provides a high quality and sustainable design which will take full advantage of the currently underutilised building. The proposals will better the significance of the Grade II Listed Building and will positively add to the wider areas character and identity. There would be no loss to the buildings historic fabric as a result of the proposed installation and fit out.
- 6.7 The proposals have been designed to ensure minimum impact on the character of the listed building and will avoid any conflict with the surrounding conservation area. The

proposed layout of the unit has been carefully considered to ensure that the building can be used as a Lounge restaurant which will contribute to the diversity of the retail and commercial activity in Newmarket, in line with development management policies DM15, DM17 and DM18.

### **Access**

- 6.8 The site is accessed via High Street to the south of the premises and is within a highly sustainable and accessible location. Access to the site is unchanged. The site is well placed in relation to public transport links with three bus stops located approximately within 170m of the site providing services to the wider area.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The application will promote the re-use of a currently unused building and will provide a high-quality restaurant and bar which will comply with the relevant local and national policy.
- 7.2 The scheme would not lead to any detrimental harm to the Grade II Listed Building or the Conservation Area and will bring the vacant unit back into beneficial use, enhancing the vitality and viability of the local area.
- 7.3 The proposals are appropriate to the character of the building and the proposed plant and extract equipment will be sited to ensure it is not visible from public viewpoints. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning and listed building consent be granted.



## **Appendix 1: Marketing Brochure**

## **Appendix 2: Copy of Statutory Listing**

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