

## Alterations and Conversion of 20 Bridge Street

20 Bridge Street

Newport

NP20 4AN



Design and Access Statement

Heritage Statement

January 2025

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## 1. Site and Contact information

**Site address:** 20, Bridge Street,  
Newport,  
NP20 4AN

### **Contact details:**

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## 2. Introduction

This heritage impact statement has been prepared by JDW architects ltd on behalf of the site owner/client to support a Full Planning with Listed Building Consent Application for minor external and internal alterations and change of use class application at Regency Chambers, 20 bridge Street Newport, South Wales.

The statement sets out to describe the nature of the built asset in heritage terms, summarise the proposed works and assess their impact on existing listed fabric.

The building currently consists of derelict, vacant office space. It has been identified by the current owner that there is a need for suitable housing in the Town Centre and that the building, with small and appropriate adaptations, could accommodate a residential use. To do this the proposals seek to make a number of minor internal and external alterations.

The property is located part way along Bridge street in Newport between Caxton place and Baneswell Road. The context of the site is characterised by a mixture of commercial and residential properties.

The building was Grade II listed in 1980 due to it being a well-preserved building in Italianate style and important site location with adjacent hotel. The perimeter of the Town Centre Conservation Area turns north at the pedestrian end of Bridge

Street to Station Street, so the property is not within the conservation area.

This design and access statement accompanies a full planning application for this site and is to be read in conjunction with all other submission documentation, which accompanies the application.



Fig1 Location of the site

## **3. Context**

### **3.1 general description**

Regency Chambers, situated at 20 Bridge Street in Newport, South Wales, is a distinguished example of 19th-century architecture, recognised for its historical and architectural significance. This Grade II listed building dates back to approximately 1870 and showcases the Italianate style, a popular architectural design of that era.

The application site is currently an abandoned building within a mixed residential / commercial area. It is within very easy walking distance to good transport links via buses and the nearby Newport railway station.

### **3.2 existing use**

The existing site consists of vacant office spaces

### **3.3 existing amount/scale**

The proposed application is for conversion, alteration and refurbishment with minor exterior alterations.

### **3.4 existing appearance**

The proposals in this application include additional windows to the rear façade on the ground floor, along with localised window repairs and/or refurbishments if required.

## 4. Design Proposal

### 4.1 proposed use

The proposed use is to provide suitable housing in the Town Centre in the form of 8 apartments.

### 4.2 proposed works

The proposed works consist of various internal and external alterations to the existing building. These alterations have been carefully considered to retain historic features, and work within the existing fabric to ensure there is no detriment to the building whilst facilitating its adaptation for residential use.

It is intended to convert all floors into residential apartments. The rooms are laid out so that the existing fabric of the building is disturbed as little as possible with the existing room layouts being adapted to retain as much of the existing structure as possible.

At the semi-basement level alterations and sub-divisions are proposed for residential accommodation. Minor external alterations and adaptations to the rear elevation at basement level include converting two existing windows into external flat openings/flat entrances. Two additional windows are also proposed to enhance natural light, making the space more suitable for residential use. Other existing windows are to be refurbished and made good if required.

On the remaining three floors above basement level, minor internal subdivisions and inclusion of bathrooms are proposed to form new residential units. These changes have been designed so that the existing fabric of the building remains undisturbed.

The existing central staircase will be preserved, as it is a significant feature of the building's architectural character. Any retention and rectification work to this staircase will use appropriate heritage materials and techniques.

The external metal staircase to the rear of the building is to be removed.

### 4.3 impact of proposed changes

Any proposed alterations to Regency Chambers must be carefully considered to avoid compromising its heritage value. Changes should:

- Respect the building's architectural character and detailing.
- Use materials and techniques that are sympathetic to the original construction.
- Ensure that any new additions or modifications are reversible, where possible, to maintain the building's historical integrity.

## 4.4 assessment of impact

The impacts of the proposals on the architectural significance of the building will be:

In relation to existing external walls – existing walls will not be affected except where new apertures are proposed to the rear

In relation to existing joinery – existing joinery will not be affected.

In relation to floors and ceilings – floors and ceiling will not be affected

Floor structure – floor joists will not be affected.

Overall - the impact of delivering new residential units will be minimal and not detrimental to the existing fabric. The proposals will positively affect the area by creating much needed housing in a sustainable location and in turn positively affect the economy of the local area.

## 5. Summary of Alternative Options

### Appraisal

To achieve the stated objectives other possible options were considered. The alternative options in order of preference with pros and cons of each are listed below:

#### **Option 1A:**

Reinstate office accommodation on all floors

Pros: Similar cost and timescale to proposals

Cons: Office use in the area is oversubscribed. Long term tenant not certain making the rectification works and internal alterations for a modern office environment not viable from a cost perspective

#### **Option 1B:**

Do nothing

Pros: Cost Saving

Cons: Long term use and upkeep of building put into jeopardy and the deterioration of internal features

#### **Option 2B:**

Do nothing

Pros: Cost Saving

Cons: Key objectives will not be attained and the restriction of the potential use viability of the space long term

#### **Conclusion:**

The change of use class sought can only be seen as a positive to bring the building back into use with minimal alterations. This will secure the asset in the long term and positively affect the economy of the local area.

## **6. Environmental sustainability**

### **6.1 sustainable materials**

Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to lower the embodied energy of the build. Materials, such as timber will also be sourced from sustainable manufacturers.

### **6.2 biodiversity and local environment**

The proposals do not cause any harm to the local environment or biodiversity due to their inherent design.

### **6.3 waste management**

The works will ensure that all waste is correctly collected and sorted on site to maximise recycling and re-use.

## **7. Movement to, from and within the development**

### **7.1 connection**

The site is located on Bridge Street, which is a mixed commercial / residential area not far from good transport links including Newport train station with direct links to London.

### **7.2 modes**

The building is only a four-minute walk from Newport Railway Station, the third busiest train station in Wales. There are also extensive networks of bus routes that converge on Queen's Way, a three-minute walk from the property.

### **7.3 parking**

Parking will not form a part of this proposal; there is sufficient local capacity for both off and on street parking.

## 8. Heritage Statement

### Building History

As categorised by Cadw

**Name of Property:** 20 Bridge Street

**Grade of Listing:** II

**Date of Designation:** 02/05/1980, updated 31/03/2000

**Reference Number:** 3000

**Broad Class:** Commercial

**History:** circa 1870

**Exterior:** Three storey, 5 window Italianate block; stucco with rusticated quoins and channelled ground floor. Bracketed cornice; 5 camber-headed windows to second floor. First floor windows have bracketed pediments, central window has engaged columns. On ground floor, round-arched openings with keystones breaking up into entablature with dentil cornice; recessed central entrance flanked by paired pilasters; paired pilasters to ends

**Reason for Designation:** Well-preserved building in Italianate style; group value with adjacent Hotel.

**Architectural Significance:** The Italianate style of Regency Chambers is evident in its ornate façade, featuring characteristic elements such as:

- Tall, narrow windows with decorative hood mouldings.
- A strong emphasis on symmetry and proportion.
- Detailed cornices and friezes that add to the visual appeal of the building.
- A well-preserved stucco finish that enhances its classical appearance.

These features contribute to the building's aesthetic value and reflect the architectural trends of the late Victorian period.

**Historical Context:** Constructed during a period of significant growth and prosperity in Newport, Regency Chambers represents the city's development as a commercial hub in the 19th century. The building has served various functions over the years, primarily as office spaces, which underscores its adaptability and continued relevance.

**Heritage Value:** As a Grade II listed building, Regency Chambers holds considerable heritage value. The designation highlights its importance as a well-preserved example of Italianate architecture in Newport. The listing protects the building's external and, where specified, internal features, ensuring that its historical integrity is maintained for future generations

The existing external design principles are continued along Bridge Street including the adjoining grade II listed Queens Hotel which is listed by CADW by virtue of it representing a well-preserved Victorian hotel on an important corner site and for its group value with 20 Bridge Street. The external architectural style of the Regency Chambers is also continued South along Baneswell Road up to and including number 18.

The significance of the building, therefore, can be seen to predominantly arise from its aesthetic value to the frontage elevations onto Bridge Street contribution within the street scene, both individually and as part of a group. The building occupies a prominent position and the architecture is typical of such buildings of the time.

The setting of the building is largely that of the surrounding townscape: to the front, the building is generally experienced as part of the street-scene, where the architecture of the facade can be clearly experienced and its historic context can be understood.

To the rear, the building backs onto a private communal car park enclosed by the rear of buildings formed on Bridge Street,

Baneswell Road and Caxton Place. The rear of the building cannot, therefore, be observed from the public realm and accordingly has little relevance on either the street scene or the nearby Town Centre Conservation Area.

The rear of the building is considerably more utilitarian in appearance compared with the ornate front elevations and is characterised by a fire escape, air conditioning unit and rainwater downpipes onto the informal car parking area. Due to a change in ground level the car park is lower than at street level by almost a full story height allowing for a lower basement level to be exposed to the rear. As a consequence, collectively the rear elevation makes no contribution to the significance of the building.

**Impact Assessment:** The building is listed for the architectural qualities of its front elevations onto both Bridge Street together with its group value in conjunction with adjoining front elevations. Accordingly the proposed works will have no impact on the setting of the front of the building.

There will be no loss of historic or communal significance, and thus overall, the internal works can be seen as preserving the character and appearance of the listed building and its setting.

**Conservation Area:** The Newport Town Centre Conservation Area designated on 17 March 1987 lies to the North- East of the application building. The Town Centre Conservation area extends from near the junction of High Street with the Old Green Crossing road junction in the north to the junction of

Commercial Street and Hill Street in the south. Either side of this spine the conservation area takes in numerous historic streets and buildings.

A description on Newport City Council's website reads:

*"Above ground much of the character and appearance of the (Town Centre) conservation area derives from the architecture of the impressive three and four story commercial buildings. Looking above the shop fronts the observant visitor will note a wealth of architectural detail that in many cases remains substantially unaltered. The large number of listed buildings within the conservation area bears testament to the exceptional quality of much of the surviving Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture."*

*"Newport City Council wishes to promote good quality design in all development in the Town Centre Conservation Area."*

It is evident from the text that the public realm is of high importance.

The proposed works are to be sited internally and to the rear elevation, consequently the proposal will not be visible from the nearby conservation area.

**Decision Making:** Regulation 96 of The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 outlines the requirements for granting or refusing consent. This notes that 'In considering whether to grant listed building consent, a planning authority or the Welsh Ministers must have special regard to the desirability of

preserving-

- A. the listed building to which the application relates,
- B. the setting of the building, and
- C. any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses.

Considering the nature of the works, it has been clearly shown that there will be no harm to the listed building, and as such, for the most part, will preserve the building and the features of importance and significance.

The proposals, therefore, comply with the requirements set out within the 2023 Act (as amended), and thus this complies with the requirements of the PPW. This then indicates that there are no specific heritage policies, which would indicate that development should not be restricted and, therefore, the application should be approved.

## 9. Summary

Regency Chambers is a vital part of Newport's architectural heritage. Its Grade II listing not only celebrates its historical and aesthetic significance but also ensures that it remains a cherished landmark. Preservation efforts should aim to maintain its distinctive character while allowing for its continued use and adaptation in a manner that respects its heritage.

The site presents an opportunity to provide additional residential units, within an existing mixed commercial and residential area close to excellent transport links.

All the proposed changes are to be formed by minor internal and rear elevation alterations, which should not impact on the external character of the listed building mentioned within the buildings listing. Localized repairs/refurbishment to the windows will only be carried out if required and will be in a like for like basis.

Where there are new insertions/partition walls, the new materials are to be scribed around the existing structure and materials to ensure there are no detrimental impacts to the existing building fabric. Where necessary the existing fabric will be made good to help ensure the existing core heritage asset is retained.