



LRJ PLANNING

Planning, Design and Development

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT**

**CHANGE OF USE, CONVERSION, REFURBISHMENT AND
ALTERATIONS OF MAXWELL CHAMBERS, 20 BRIDGE STREET,
NEWPORT, NP20 4AN TO CREATE 8 APARTMENTS**

MAXWELL CHAMBERS, 20 BRIDGE STREET, NEWPORT, NP20 4AN

February 2025



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by LRJ Planning Ltd to accompany the full planning application and application for listed building consent for the change of use, conversion, refurbishment and alterations of Maxwell Chambers, 20 Bridge Street, Newport, NP20 4AN to create 8 apartments.
- 1.2 This Statement provides a planning analysis to demonstrate that the submitted proposal is acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the relevant policy and guidance.
- 1.3 Both applications are supported by a site layout plan, floor plans and full elevational plans, as well as supporting technical documents, which illustrate that the site is capable of accommodating the development and its associated works.
- 1.4 The remainder of this Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2: Site Location and Description
 - Section 3: Background
 - Section 4: Development Proposal
 - Section 5: Planning Policy Context
 - Section 6: Planning Analysis
 - **A) The principle of development**
 - **B) Impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building and Conservation Area**
 - **C) Impact on residential amenity**
 - **D) Level of amenity for future occupants**
 - **E) Access and Parking**
 - **F) Biodiversity**
 - Section 7: Design and Access Statement
 - Section 8: Conclusion



2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Maxwell Chambers, located at 20 Bridge Street in Newport, South Wales, stands as a distinguished representation of 19th-century architecture, renowned for both its historical and architectural significance. This impressive Grade II listed building, constructed around 1870, exemplifies the Italianate style, a highly favoured architectural design of the period, characterised by ornate detailing, classical proportions, and elegant façade features.
- 2.2 The application site, which is currently a vacant and neglected building, is situated within a mixed-use area that accommodates both residential and commercial properties. Its prime location benefits from excellent connectivity, being within a short and convenient walking distance of well-established public transport links, including regular bus services and the nearby Newport railway station, which offers direct connections to major destinations.
- 2.3 The location of the site is illustrated in Figures 1 below.

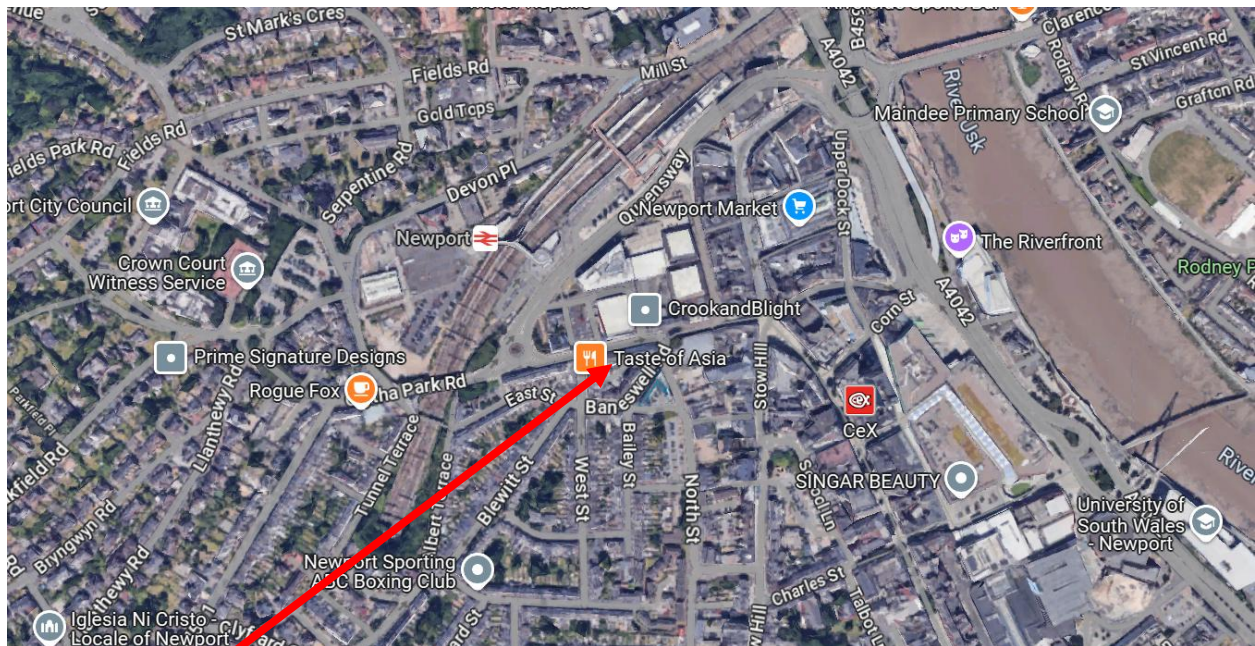


Figure 1: Aerial View of Site

- 2.4 Maxwell Chambers was officially designated as a Grade II listed building by Cadw on 2 May 1980. The listing description is as follows



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.

- 2.5 The property is strategically well placed within the City Centre with all services and amenities including a bus and railway station, as well as employment opportunities within easy walking distance.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 There is no recent planning history relating to this proposal.

4.0 Proposal

- 4.1 Full planning permission and listed building consent is therefore sought for change of use of the property to 8 apartments.
- 4.2 The proposed works involve a series of carefully considered internal and external alterations to the existing building. These modifications have been designed with a strong emphasis on preserving the building's historic character, ensuring that all interventions are sympathetic to the original fabric and do not compromise its architectural integrity. The works aim to sensitively adapt the building for residential use while maintaining and enhancing its historic features.
- 4.3 The proposal seeks to convert all floors of the building into self-contained residential apartments. The internal layout has been carefully planned to minimise disruption to the existing structure, with room configurations adapted to work within the building's original framework wherever possible. This approach ensures that



the conversion respects the historic layout while allowing for a functional and high-quality residential environment.

- 4.4 At the semi-basement level, internal alterations and subdivisions are proposed to accommodate residential units. Externally, minor modifications to the rear elevation at basement level include the conversion of two existing windows into entrances for individual flats, providing direct access. To improve natural light and ventilation, two additional windows are proposed, ensuring the space is better suited for residential occupation. Any existing windows that require refurbishment will be carefully restored using appropriate materials to match the original aesthetic and maintain the building's historic character.
- 4.5 On the three upper floors, only minimal internal alterations are proposed, primarily consisting of minor subdivisions and the introduction of bathrooms to facilitate the creation of separate residential units. These interventions have been designed to be as non-intrusive as possible, preserving the existing fabric of the building and ensuring that its original architectural features remain largely intact.
- 4.6 A key element of the proposal is the retention and conservation of the central staircase, which is an important architectural feature of the building. Any necessary repairs or restorative work will be carried out using appropriate heritage materials and traditional construction techniques to ensure authenticity and longevity.
- 4.7 In contrast, the existing external metal staircase to the rear of the building is proposed for removal. This alteration is intended to enhance the building's overall appearance and improve its relationship with the surrounding environment.
- 4.8 Overall, the proposed works strike a balance between the need for modern residential accommodation and the preservation of the building's historic and architectural significance.



4.9 As copy of the proposed site layout, floor plans and elevations are provided in the submitted drawings accompanying this application.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 The planning policy framework for the determination of this application is provided by the content and scope of National Planning Policy, which is contained within the Wales Spatial Plan, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and its associated Technical Advice Notes (TANs), together with the Development Plan for the local area.

Planning Policy Wales

5.2 Planning Policy Wales sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. This contains guidance for the preparation of Local Authority's development plans, development management, and sets out the WG commitment to creating sustainable developments.

Development Plan

5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

5.4 Part 2 (Sustainable Development) of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 says the following:

1. This section applies to the exercise by the Welsh Ministers, a local planning authority in Wales or any other public body—

(a) of a function under Part 6 of PCPA 2004 in relation to the National Development Framework for Wales, a strategic development plan or a local development plan;

(b) of a function under Part 3 of TCPA 1990 in relation to an



application for planning permission made (or proposed to be made) to the Welsh Ministers or to a local planning authority in Wales.

2. The function must be exercised, as part of carrying out sustainable development in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 for the purpose of ensuring that the development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

5.5 The Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) is the development plan for the purposes of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The relevant polices are referred to below.

- SP1 (Sustainability)
- SP3 (Flood risk)
- SP9 (Conservation of the Natural, Historic and Built Environment)
- SP13 (Planning Obligations)
- SP18 (Urban Regeneration)
- GP1 (Climate Change)
- GP2 (General Amenity)
- GP3 (Service Infrastructure)
- GP4 (Highways and Accessibility)
- GP5 (Natural Environment)
- GP6 (Quality of Design)
- GP7 (Environmental Protection and Health)
- CE7 (Conservation Areas)



- EM3 (Alternative uses of employment land)
- H4 (Affordable housing)
- H8 (Self contained accommodation)
- W3 (Waste)

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The following SPG is relevant:

- Parking Standards;
- Affordable Housing;
- Flat conversions;
- Wildlife and development; and
- Waste storage and collection

6.0 Planning Appraisal

- 6.1 This section seeks to highlight the main issues relevant to the determination of the application and assesses the scheme against the local and national planning policies and guidance referenced in section 6.0 above.
- 6.2 In formulating the proposal, special regard has been given to the more detailed requirements of the suite of local and national planning policy. The requirements and standards of these documents have heavily influenced the final scheme, ensuring that a development of the highest possible quality, appropriate to its setting, is submitted for approval.
- 6.3 The main issues that are considered pertinent to the appraisal of this proposal are:
- The principle of development;
 - The design of the proposal and its impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building and Conservation Area;



- The impact of the development on local residential amenity;
- Amenity for future occupants;
- Transport matters;
- Biodiversity.

A) The principle of development

- 6.4 The application site comprises a parcel of previously developed, or ‘brownfield’, land, situated within the urban boundary. One of the core principles in local and national planning policy is that planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land which has been previously developed (brownfield land). The LDP also promotes developments and encourages patterns of growth which focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made, sustainable.
- 6.5 In accordance with the provisions of local and national planning policy, the proposal constitutes effective use of previously developed land in a sustainable location for a comprehensive redevelopment proposal. The scheme would deliver significant social, economic and environmental regeneration benefits.
- 6.6 The proposal will deliver a scheme that will bring this building back into use.
- 6.7 Turning to the provision of self-contained flats, Policy H8 of the LDP identifies that:

“Within the defined settlement boundaries, proposals to subdivide a property into self contained accommodation, bedsits or a house in multiple occupation will only be permitted if:

- i) the scale and intensity of use does not harm the character of the building and locality and will not cause an unacceptable reduction in the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or result in on street parking problems;*



- ii) *the proposal does not create an over concentration of houses in multiple occupation in any one area of the city which would change the character of the neighbourhood or create an imbalance in the housing stock;*
- iii) *adequate noise insulation is provided;*
- iv) *adequate amenity for future occupiers.”*

6.8 The proposed change of use of this property, situated within the defined settlement boundary at the heart of the City Centre, to create eight self-contained apartments is considered to be entirely acceptable. The proposal represents an efficient and sustainable re-use of an existing building, making effective use of urban land and contributing positively to the area’s housing supply.

6.9 The introduction of residential units at this location is intended to foster a vibrant and active community, enhancing the social and economic vitality of the area. The proposed mix of units has been carefully considered to ensure it meets local housing needs and aligns with relevant planning policies. The variety of unit sizes will provide accommodation suitable for a diverse range of residents, thereby supporting a balanced and sustainable urban community.

6.10 The principle of residential development at this site is wholly appropriate and aligns with the objectives of Policy H8 of the Local Development Plan (LDP), which encourages the provision of housing within sustainable urban locations. Given the site's accessibility to local services, amenities, and public transport, it presents an ideal opportunity for high-quality residential development that supports sustainable living patterns.

6.11 The proposed development represents an optimal use of the site by delivering much-needed housing on previously developed land within the urban boundary. This form of sustainable redevelopment ensures that land resources are used efficiently, in accordance with national and local planning objectives aimed at



promoting urban regeneration and reducing pressure on undeveloped greenfield sites.

- 6.12 In addition to providing new homes, the scheme will significantly enhance the built environment and improve local amenity. The revitalisation of the site will contribute to the overall character of the area, ensuring a more attractive and functional urban setting. Furthermore, the proposal delivers public benefits by increasing housing provision, supporting the local economy, and contributing to the vitality of the city centre.
- 6.13 As the development results in the creation of residential accommodation within a highly sustainable location, it is asserted that the principle of development is entirely acceptable. The proposal makes use of previously developed land within the defined urban area, aligning with both local and national planning policies that prioritise sustainable urban growth.

B) The design of the proposal and its impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building and Conservation Area

- 6.14 Planning policy at a local and national level require development to create high quality buildings and places in which people want to live and work.
- 6.15 The proposed development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development. In pursuance of this, the proposed development will be visually attractive, sympathetic to the local character and context, maintain a strong sense of place and distinctiveness.
- 6.16 The proposal will create a sense of place that is safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.



- 6.17 A high quality approach has been taken to optimise the capacity of the site to achieve the aspirations of delivering housing at the site whilst fully considering its impacts on the area including on townscape and local amenity.
- 6.18 The scheme has been designed to respond to the historic importance of the building, as well as enhancing its setting within the designated Conservation Area. The scheme has evolved to ensure the scheme is right for the local area.
- 6.19 In addition, a Heritage Impact Assessment has been submitted with the proposal, which finds that:
- “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.”*
- 6.20 Overall, the proposals will be highly beneficial to the building’s aesthetic value and will also help conserve the existing structure, benefitting its evidential value thus complying with Policy CE7 of the LDP.

C) The impact of the development on local residential amenity

- 6.21 Policies GP2 and H8 of the LDP seeks to ensure that proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- 6.22 The surrounding area is characterised by a dense urban landscape, with tightly packed development and a range of local amenities in close proximity. There is no indication that the proposed commercial use of the property, along with the provision of 8 apartments would negatively affect neighbouring properties. This is due to the appropriate separation distances that will be maintained between the development and surrounding buildings.



- 6.23 The proposal is suitable for the size and scale of the property and are not expected to compromise the amenity of nearby properties. There is no evidence to suggest that the development will result in any notable increase in noise or disturbance.
- 6.24 In conclusion, the proposal will not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, ensuring compliance with Policies GP2 and H8 of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

D) Amenity for future occupants

- 6.25 The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on flat conversions provides comprehensive guidance on internal space standards for residential units. All proposed units will meet or exceed these required internal floor space standards, ensuring ample living space for future residents. Moreover, the central location ensures easy access to a variety of services and amenities within the City Centre, further enhancing the convenience and desirability of the property.
- 6.26 Overall, each flat will offer a high standard of living, with every room benefiting from good natural light, ventilation, and a clear outlook, ensuring the accommodation is light, spacious, and airy.
- 6.27 The proposal is therefore fully compliant with the Council's SPG on flat conversions, providing a well-designed and comfortable living environment for future occupants. is therefore compliant with the Council's SPG relating to flat conversions.



E) Access arrangements and Parking

- 6.28 One of the key objectives of national planning policy is to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable and accessible.
- 6.29 Support is given to schemes where opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken, the number and length of journeys needed for a range of uses can be minimised, and safe and suitable access to the development site can be achieved for all users.
- 6.30 The proposed development will be car free given the constraints of the site and the proximity to the City Centre, as well as the sites location within parking zone 1.
- 6.31 The development will be car free and the use of sustainable forms of transport are promoted.
- 6.32 Due to the proximity of the property to a range of local amenities and services within the City Centre that are within 800m, which is within an easy walking distance. Future occupants will be attracted to the property by virtue of its proximity to good public transport links, as well as its location within the City Centre.
- 6.33 The development proposals are considered to result in a negligible impact on the local highway network, public transport network, and local walking and cycling infrastructure and would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety.
- 6.34 In terms of accessibility and sustainability, the development with easy access to a several local services, facilities and amenities possible on foot, via a dedicated pedestrian footway. The nearby bus station provide further options for sustainable forms of transportation to serve the development.



6.35 Overall, the development would be located within a sustainable and accessible urban area, be suitably served by sustainable forms of transportation, adequate site access and cycle provision. Accordingly, the proposal is compliant with Policies GP4 and H8 of the LDP.

F) Biodiversity

6.36 The proposal will deliver ecological enhancements to secure a significant biodiversity net gain and enhancement of the area.

7.0 Design and Access Statement

7.1 The purpose of a Design and Access Statement (DAS) is to provide a clear and logical document to demonstrate and explain the various facets of design and access in relation to the site. The DAS also acts as a method of demonstrating the details of a planning application in a way that can be read both by professionals and the public. The diagram below, extracted from the Welsh Government guidance on preparing a DAS, illustrates the various considerations that need to be taken into account when preparing such a document.



Figure 2: Objectives of good design



7.2 The circular nature of the diagram represents the equal weightings that need to be given to each of the 5 Objectives of Good Design: Access; Movement; Character; Environmental Sustainability and Community Safety.

i) Access

7.3 The building occupies a sustainable location with easy access to a range of amenities, services, and transport links and are easily accessible by different forms of transport. The position of the site therefore offers no barriers for those accessing the site by foot or car. A level threshold is provided into the building.

7.4 As part of the developing package of management measures, those responsible for the completed project will be made aware of their responsibilities. Under the Equality Act 2010 the need to maintain facilities providing for an accessible environment are important issues to be considered including:

- Ensuring that a suitable Access Strategy has been developed identifying design detailing and the management of the Equality Act process from the inception of the complex through its whole life. This document along with the proposed building plans and Building Regulation consultation / approval are also important in this respect.
- Ensuring suitable management and personnel policies in respect of disability, both for all visitors.
- Communication issues such as information, signage / wayfinding are all-important and need to be maintained.
- Management of the building e.g. ensuring where possible that the facilities are suitable to allow wheelchair user suitable space, updating and improving wayfinding systems, as appropriate.



- Maintenance – it is vitally important that all aspects of accessibility are maintained (e.g. keeping access routes clear, maintaining doors, keeping floor, external surfaces and sanitary facilities clear, replacing blown light bulbs).
- Awareness – where a service is provided, ensuring there is information available on the facilities and access available for disabled people. This can be via publicity material (adverts, website), or in arranging to visit the building.
- Future work – ensuring future work does not compromise access issues.

ii) **Character**

- 7.5 Policy CE7 requires all development within or adjacent to a Conservation Area to be designed to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that Conservation Area and sets out similar criteria to help achieve this. The LDP also refers to the statutory duties and responsibilities of all parties towards Listed Buildings to 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.
- 7.6 At the heart of the proposal is to ensure a vibrant reuse of this designated heritage asset. The overarching aim of the proposal is to convert this vacant building to ensure that it enhances the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area and enhance its prominent setting.
- 7.7 The proposal intends to utilise the existing fabric of the building. Minor external alterations and adaptations are proposed to the rear elevation at basement level to improve both functionality and aesthetics. The works will include the conversion of two existing windows into external flat entrances, facilitating direct access to the basement accommodation. In addition, two new windows are proposed to enhance



natural light levels, thereby creating a more comfortable and habitable living environment. Furthermore, all existing windows will be assessed, and where necessary, they will be refurbished and restored to ensure they are in good condition and fit for purpose. These modifications aim to enhance the overall usability and appearance of the property while maintaining its architectural integrity.

- 7.8 The proposed minor nature of the works proposed would complement the existing building and enhance its immediate setting.
- 7.9 Overall, the use proposed and minor nature of the interventions will allow a vibrant re-use. The sensitive re-use of this vacant property will preserve the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

iii) Movement

- 7.10 The site occupies a sustainable location, and active travel will be encouraged, given the proximity to a frequent bus service.

iv) Community Safety

- 7.11 The proposal would ensure a continued presence within the building during all times of day and night that will help discourage crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 7.12 The proposed change of use to 8 apartments meets *Secure by Design* standards by incorporating key principles that enhance safety and security within the development. The design includes controlled access points, ensuring that only residents and authorised personnel can enter the building. Communal areas are well-lit and designed to offer clear sightlines, reducing the risk of concealed spaces. Security measures such as CCTV, secure entry systems, and reinforced



doors and windows have been integrated to deter unauthorised access and promote a safe living environment. The layout also encourages natural surveillance, with apartments overlooking shared spaces and surrounding streets, contributing to a secure and cohesive community.

v) Environmental Sustainability

7.13 As touched upon above, the site occupies a sustainable location with access to a range of amenities. The proposal intends to use the fabric of the existing building, so therefore minimises the need to use natural resources. The proposal therefore represents a sustainable re-use of an existing building.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 In conclusion, the proposed development would ensure that the building is sympathetically restored with an acceptable beneficial use. Furthermore, sustaining the economy is a vital element of sustainable development, and the latter is about positive growth. Progress has to be made for the betterment of the local economy and social community. The proposal would deliver significant socio-economic benefits through the creation of a vibrant re-use of the property, as well delivering a much-needed homes and the associated regeneration benefits.

8.2 The site makes the more appropriate and efficient use of this vacant building, in a location which has access to a number of local services, facilities and amenities by sustainable transportation modes.

8.3 The use of the site would ensure a vibrant reuse of this vacant building whilst improving the sense of place and further public benefit through enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as well renovating this designated heritage asset.



- 8.4 The proposal would be served by suitable access and would have an acceptable impact on local residential amenity, improving the visual amenities of the area. It ensures that the development secures a net gain in biodiversity.
- 8.5 The scheme is fully compliant with the suite of local and national planning policies. It is therefore requested that planning permission and listed building consent is granted.