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Sent: 25 September 2026 10:12

To: Ostler, Marnie (Planning Officer) <Marnie.Ostler@Newport.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Planning Consultation Request for case ref: 26/0714 (42C Commercial Street Newport NP20 1LP) (FULL)

Hi Marnie

Re: PART CONVERSION OF EXISTING COMMERCIAL PREMISES INTO 4NO. SELF-CONTAINED FLATS

As you are aware, applications for conversion of the upper floors of this building have previously been considered and refused (25/0120 & 25/0610).

Legislation, Policy, and Guidance

In respect of Conservation Areas, Section 160 of the HEWA 2023 imposes the general duty (derived from Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)) that *"In exercising a planning function in relation to a building or other land in a conservation area, a person must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area"*.

It should also be noted that the '*special regard*' duty has previously been tested in the Court of Appeal in terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990), wherein '[Barnwell Manor](#)' confirmed that *"considerable importance and weight"* should be afforded by the decision maker to the desirability of preserving a listed building along with its setting.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024) states that:

"6.1.6 The Welsh Government's specific objectives for the historic environment seek to:

- preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, whilst the same time helping them remain vibrant and prosperous;*

6.1.14 There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings...

6.1.15 There is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds.

6.1.16 Preservation or enhancement of a conservation area can be achieved by a development which either makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance or leaves them unharmed. Mitigation measures can also be considered which could result in an overall neutral or positive impact of a proposed development in a conservation area."

Policy CE7 of Newport Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026, January 2015 states that:

*“DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO CONSERVATION AREAS WILL BE REQUIRED TO:
i) BE DESIGNED TO PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, HAVING REGARD TO THE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL WHERE APPROPRIATE.*

ii) AVOID THE REMOVAL OF EXISTING HISTORIC FEATURES, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONTS AND JOINERY.

iii) USE MATERIALS WHICH ARE TRADITIONAL, OR APPROPRIATE TO THEIR CONTEXT.

iv) COMPLEMENT OR REFLECT THE ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES OF NEARBY BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

Analysis

42C Commercial Street is located within the Town Centre Conservation Area. As a non-dwellinghouse, there is no ‘Permitted Development’ for external alteration.

The [City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal](#) (April 2018 - Consultation Draft) (CAA) identifies this property as a positive contributor (i.e. *“a building, structure or feature which beneficially adds to the overall character of its local area”*).

The building in question is a striking late Victorian/Edwardian commercial elevation, designed in a confident classical style and distinguished by a strong sense of symmetry. The composition is arranged around a central vertical axis, rising through the ground floor entrance bay, elevational treatment to all upper floors, and terminating in an ornate pedimented feature at roof level. The façade is three bays wide, with symmetry at every level, creating a balanced and highly ordered architectural composition. The central bay is emphasised through its slightly projecting treatment, while the crowning segmental pediment and enriched decorative detailing provide a focal point for the overall design.

The principal upper elevations are richly ornamented with moulded pilasters, engaged columns, bracketed cornices and elaborate window surrounds. At first-floor level, a prominent curved bay extends across the frontage, visually tying the three bays together and adding depth and prominence within the wider streetscape. Above, a symmetrical arrangement of round-headed windows with pronounced architraves and decorative keystones creates a rhythm typical of prosperous late nineteenth-century commercial architecture. The uppermost storey is framed by paired pilasters and a heavily embellished pediment, contributing to the varied and picturesque roofscape identified as a characteristic element of Newport's town centre conservation area.

To the upper floors, this front elevation is formed in masonry (now crudely painted), with sliding sash windows in painted timber. Particular interest is attributable to the curved-plan sashes which terminate the projecting first-floor bay, and the semi-circular heads to the sash windows of the second.

This building exemplifies the CAA's description of Newport's grand commercial architecture, wherein richly decorated façades, classical detailing, bay windows, ornamental pediments, and unified elevational compositions create a distinctive townscape of considerable architectural interest. Despite alterations at ground-floor level, its symmetrical façade, decorative detailing, prominent bay windows, and dramatic crowning pediment ensures that the building continues to contribute positively to the architectural richness, visual cohesion, and historic commercial character of the

conservation area. Its scale, proportions, craftsmanship, strong symmetry, and strong vertical emphasis make it an important component of the historic streetscape and an attractive landmark within the city centre.

As existing, the ground floor shopfront has seen considerable harmful alteration since June 2018 (see below vs 2026), with the moulded and painted timber having been over-clad with tiles, and the fascia enlarged and brought harmfully forwards. I cannot see that this work has ever been authorised.



Windows

The proposed front elevation drawing states '*K: Internal secondary glazing with white UPVC sash windows*'. This seems rather ambiguous, though it is clarified by the DAS, which states that '*Internal secondary UPVC sash windows will be installed for thermal and acoustic insulation*'. I would suggest that clarity is sought, particularly as existing and proposed elevation drawings are of low quality and do not show correct window detailing.

Majority of windows to the rear elevation of the principal building are little seen, due both to the form of the building, and the fact that the rear service road does not constitute public realm. Upon this basis, I have no concern regarding proposed window alterations here.

Masonry Elevation

Proposed drawings are annotated to show the principal elevation as featuring “*G: Smooth rendered external walls*”. This requires clarification as the existing appears to be decorative masonry albeit heavily over-painted. We do not want any render additions here.

Shopfront Elevation

As noted above, the existing shopfront has seen very harmful and unconsented alteration, undertaken following occupation on 13th March 2023. An enforcement case is due to be raised to this regard.

As matters stand, should a new doorway be introduced within the existing shopfront arrangement as proposed, this will unbalance the highly pronounced symmetry of the principal elevation, resulting in further harm to the character and appearance of the Town Centre Conservation Area. Upon this basis, it is my view that the whole shopfront should be reconsidered, to restore a timber shopfront of high quality and traditional design, as per Item 5.3. of our Shopfronts SPG, which states that ‘*When altering shop fronts, efforts should be made to reinstate the horizontal and vertical lines and the proportions of the parent building, as well as uncovering and reinstating lost architectural features where possible.*’ This would go some way towards mitigating against the harm of unbalancing the existing elevation – and the harm already imposed without the benefit of consent. It may be that residual harm can be balanced against a viable use for the upper floors to the building and any perceived public benefit which may result.

Detailed drawings (elevation and section) of the proposed shopfront design should also be requested, either up-front or via condition (to a minimum scale of 1:20 @ A1, including elevations, vertical and horizontal sections, with larger scale details sufficient to describe the proposed).

Other

The DAS states that there will be ‘*Mechanical ventilation for kitchens, showers, bin stores, and cycle stores.*’ Where will the external ducts be located and how will they appear? We do not wish to see them placed upon the prominent front elevation of the building.

Many thanks,

Guy Arnall

Guy Arnall

Prif Swyddog Treftadaeth / Principal Heritage Officer
Swyddog Dirprwyedig (Adeiladau Rhestredig) / Delegated Officer (Listed Buildings)

Adfywio a Datblygu Economaidd / Regeneration and Economic Development
Cyngor Dinas Casnewydd / Newport City Council