

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

CHANGE OF USE AND ALTERATIONS TO  
20B HIGH STREET, NORTHWOOD HA6 1BN

## PLANNING APPLICATION

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**This planning application relates to a 2- storey free-standing backland property on the East side of Northwood High Street (A4125) which runs from north to south. The application seeks planning permission for a Change of Use from Office use (B1) to Residential (C3). The site lies within the London Borough of Hillingdon. It is set back behind from the main High Street buildings and is accessed through a covered passageway between nos. 18 and 20 High Street, in the shopping parade.**

#### **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The application building is currently vacant and the building appears to be maintained in good condition, but subject to surveys. The site is set back from the High Street by approximately 20 metres.

#### **2. THE SITE AND LOCATION**

The site lies behind a predominantly retail 2-storey 'parade' of High Street shops on the East side of the High Street. The West side of the High Street is mainly residential use at this location, with detached and semi-detached houses set back from the High Street with gardens and off-street parking.

The existing covered passageway from the High Street provides narrow vehicular access and pedestrian access to a rear open yard, and to a separate outbuilding and a high boundary wall, neither of which form part of this application. The application building is accessed by a glazed front door within the passageway. The immediate surrounding buildings uses are a mixture of residential, retail and commercial/office use, with a large neighbouring industrial/storage building further to the north and a small housing estate to the East side of the site.

#### **3. THE BUILDING**

The existing small two-storey Victorian building is of brick construction and a slate roof. Black metal window frames are not original to the building. The building is currently vacant and appears in good structural condition, subject to further detailed survey. The current Planning Use is Office/commercial use. The internal floor area is 800 sq feet. An external steel staircase leads up to a separate first floor entrance door, suggesting a previous separate first floor tenancy and/or use as a fire escape.

#### **4. INTERIOR**

Internally, the spaces consist of one large ground floor main room where an open tread staircase leads to the first floor which contains a generous landing and three rooms. The west side of the building includes a small kitchen and WCs on the ground floor. The rear of the building interior is one step above the main level.

On the first floor, a generous landing gives direct access up to a large room with two windows facing the passageway, with an adjoining smaller room beyond. A wall opening with three steps lead up to a further rear room with windows overlooking the rear external area.

The existing internal finishes have no special architectural or decorative features and reflect the relatively modern conversion to its current use as offices. The building is currently vacant.

## 5. BRIEF SITE HISTORY

Early recorded local history includes reference to the hamlet of Ruislip in the Domesday Book but significant 'growth' took place in this locality only in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

The existing High Street was formerly an open track linking Rickmansworth to Gate Hill Farm. After the Metropolitan Railway line opened in 1887, including a station at Northwood, much suburban residential and commercial development took place on the High Street and the surrounding area. Frank Carew bought land around the new station and then sold off plots for development. The direct train connection to central London allowed residents to easily commute daily into all parts of central London. In 1895 the first shops opened on the East side of the street, leading eventually to a full 'parade' of shops stretching for approximately one third of a mile. Niklaus Pevsner describes this parade as 'very modest' (*London 3 -North-west*).

The opposite side of the High Street has remained in residential use, with houses and front gardens. The application site and building are fairly typical of others in the High Street area where rear buildings and out-buildings are in residential and office use. The adjacent site to the south east is a more recently constructed housing development of 8 units. (Vincent Court).

## 6. FLOOD RISK

The application site is in Flood Risk Zone 1. Within this zone, the probability of flood from rivers is less than 0.1% annually. This is the lowest risk category for surface flooding from rivers.

## 7. THE BUILDING

The application relates to the *free-standing independent building* situated at the rear of the line of the existing terrace of typical two-storey High Street commercial and residential buildings. The building is of traditional construction with stock brickwork and double-pitched slate roof. The original window frames appear to have been replaced with modern black aluminium double-glazed window frames. The exterior and interior fabric appear to be in good condition. The gable-end brick wall facing the High Street is painted red.

## 8. APPRAISAL AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This development is in a backland site location in a vacant 2-storey brick building. The current planning use is of this space is **Office use** (Class E). The application seeks a change of use to **Residential use**. There is no frontage to Northwood High Street.

The impact of this proposal upon the immediate surrounding area will be minimal, mainly due to the minimal external alterations, and the immediate surrounding use opposite this site (use as offices). A residential use for this building location is ideal for residents who wish to have a spacious dwelling in a convenient location close to all amenities. The proposal accords with Local Planning Policy which supports an increase in appropriate new residential development

## **9. ACESIBILITY**

The proposals relate to a two-storey ground floor space at the rear of an existing group of buildings fronting the High Street. The site is close to a main-street and nearby bus-stops.

The passageway link to the High Street is step-free. Access into the property for wheelchair users would require a short removable ramp due to the existing step at the front door. There is no space available to build a compliant permanent ramp in the passageway.

The site is close to Northwood Underground station (Metropolitan underground line and Main Line services) and is very close to local bus stops for bus services serving Northwood High Street.

## **10. FIRE SAFETY**

This conversion will be carried out with full compliance with current Fire Regulations (Building Regulations Part B) and all relevant current Building Regulations. Also the requirements for safe fire escape and Firefighting Access have been taken into account in the proposals, which will be detailed later in an application for Building Regulations approval. Automatic smoke and fire detection and alarm systems will be included in the alterations in accordance with current Building Regulations Part B for this type of building in residential use.

The use of fire-resistant internal surface linings will be applied throughout, as required under Building Regulations. Fire-fighting access for pumping and rescue would take place from the High Street, and the use of a 35 metre or longer fire hose would be sufficient to reach all areas of the application building from the kerb of the High Street.

## **11. FLOOD ZONE**

A 'medium flood risk' designation applies to this area of Northwood. This equates to Flood Zone 1 where there is a 1%-3% risk of annual flooding. This requires a Flood Risk Assessment which is shown in Section 15 below.

## **12. LAND CONTAMINATION**

There is no actual or documented evidence of land contamination on this site or in the immediate surrounding area. The proposals do not include excavation work other than the formation of new above-ground shallow soil connections to the existing drains at floor level. The nearest manhole access has been identified and surveyed.

## **13. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS**

The applicant aims to provide a high-quality residential development which would be commensurate with the standards desired by those seeking to live in this area and to be close to local amenities and transportation. In particular an attractive open-plan living space will be provided, as well as a generous sized kitchen and bathroom facilities. There is no designated parking space within the site.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

The existing building offers an ideal opportunity to provide residential accommodation in an area already established with predominantly mixed residential and retail uses, and with good transport connections and local amenities.

## **15. FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT-SUMMARY**

Site location : 20B High Street Northwood HA6 1BN

Flood Zone category : **Zone 1**

( Low probability of flooding from rivers and annual probability of flooding is less than 0.1% )

No critical drainage problems have been reported and flooding from groundwater is 'unlikely in this area'.

The level of the main internal ground floor of the application building is approximately 230mm above the adjacent public pavement of the passageway. There is a raised brick step and metal threshold at the front door.

The surface of the passageway at this site slopes downwards towards the High Street. Therefore it is most unlikely that standing floodwater could remain at or near this site.

## **16. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY**

It is considered that these proposals are in compliance with current LB Hillingdon Local Planning Policy, in particular the Hillingdon Local Plan Review, as well as National Planning Policy Guidance.

The proposal will make a small contribution to the increase in housing stock in Hillingdon and is consistent with the current 5 year planned delivery of new housing 2022-2027.

**REFER TO THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR SITE PHOTOGRAPHS -**

**17. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS** The site photographs below were taken in September 2024.



1. VIEW OF THE ACCESS PASSAGEWAY TAKEN FROM THE HIGH STREET.  
Application building in the background-left side (red brick wall and black stair).



## 2. VIEW OF THE GABLE FAÇADE

Steps in the foreground are not part of the application site.



3. (RIGHT) VIEW OF THE PASSAGEWAY FROM THE HIGH STREET, SHOWING BUILDING (RED WALL) AND PASSAGEWAY CONTINUING BEYOND.



4. VIEW FROM THE SITE LOOKING BACK TOWARDS THE HIGH STREET. THE STEEL STAIRCASE (RIGHT) IS TO BE REMOVED.



5. RIGHT : VIEW OF THE ENTRANCE DOOR (RIGHT OF PICTURE)



6. CONTEXT VIEW SHOWING THE PASSAGEWAY FROM THE APPLICATION SITE.  
(PART OF ENTRANCE DOOR D1 SHOWN ON EXTREME RIGHT)

BUILDING TO THE LEFT AND DILAPIDATED DOORWAY - NOT PART OF APPLICATION SITE



7. VIEW OF GROUND FLOOR MAIN ROOM.

ENTRANCE DOOR D1 ON THE LEFT, PART OF THE INTERNAL STAIRCASE ON RIGHT



8. RAISED STEP AT PASSAGEWAY ENTRANCE, (STAIRCASE TO BE REMOVED).



9. STEPS AT SECONDARY ENTRANCE (DOOR D2)

END OF STATEMENT.