

FOX-AD

Design Access & Heritage Statement

For

Conversion and change of use of an existing Commercial Unit to form 2x residential flats and a smaller commercial unit

At

Da Vinci Italian Restaurant – West County Hotel –
Market Square – Millom – Cumbria – LA18 4HZ



This document is to be read in conjunction with FOX-AD LTD Planning Documents.

1. Introduction

Fox Architectural Design Ltd has been appointed by Mr. Dicorato to provide design documentation and submit a full application for the proposed development at The Da-Vinci Restaurant within the West County Hotel in Millom.

The proposal consists of the following:

1. Part change of use of the existing Commercial section of the property to Residential.
2. Conversion of existing commercial unit at Ground & Basement levels to provide 2x residential flats and a smaller commercial unit.
3. Minor external alterations to an existing building.

The purpose of this document is to provide the local authority with a design proposal that is fit for purpose in terms of the client's requirements, respects the neighbouring properties, and remains sympathetic to its local and immediate setting.

In addition to this document is a set of drawings they are as follows:

- 23-31-P-L - Location - Block Plan
- 24-31-P-02 - Existing Plans
- 24-31-P-03 - Existing Elevations 01
- 24-31-P-04 - Existing Elevations 02
- 24-31-P-05 - Proposed Plans
- 24-31-P-06 - Proposed Elevations 01
- 24-31-P-07 - Proposed Elevations 02

2. Location



(Fig.01 – Google Maps Aerial Image)

The site for this application is situated central of Millom Town on the corner of Lancashire Road & St. Georges Road to the perimeter of Market Square, located at Ground & Basement floor levels of the West County Hotel building.

As per the image below, the site also resides within the Millom Conservation Area.



(Fig.02 – Millom Conservation Area Map)

3. Development Boundaries

The documents appended to this application clearly identify the site ownership, and application boundary with a red line as required by the Local Planning Authority. See Fig. 03 below.

It is important to note that the application site is for the Ground Floor & Basement section of the existing building only.



(Fig.03 – Site Location Plan – see drawing 24-31-P-L)

4. Existing Site

The existing building is the former West County Hotel, which is currently predominantly residential.

The Ground Floor area off of Market Square is a commercial restaurant (Da Vinci Italian), with a large Basement area used for storage.

Several access points to the residential flats above are located off of Lancashire Road, with other openings used for Basement Access and Access to the rear Kitchen section of the restaurant.

The only access points off of Market Square is the main entrance to the restaurant.

The existing building does not have any car parking spaces due to its location; however local amenities are within walking distance to the application site.

We note the upper floors of the West County Hotel have previously been converted to flats with no dedicated parking provision.

5. Pre-Application Feedback

Feedback as to the feasibility of converting part of the commercial section of the building to flats was received dated 23rd September 2024 reference: PAA/24/0034 from Christie M Burns.

The client opted to present two options to the local authority in order to obtain comments for a preferred option to be chosen to proceed onto a full planning application.

In addition to the preferred scheme design, it was advised that a Biodiversity Net Gain statement should accompany the supporting documentation when submitting an application of this nature.

A copy of the feedback will be appended to the planning application submission.

6. Approach to Design

Limitations:

Below are some design limitations which have to be taken into account during the design process:

- Designing within an Area of existing residential properties,
- Designing with a privacy approach,
- Consideration of existing views from neighbouring properties,
- Converting an existing Internal Space,
- Distances to boundaries and neighbouring properties,
- Working within a defined site boundary,
- Overlooking – consideration of public view,
- Parking for residential & commercial properties,

Opportunities:

During the design process there are several site opportunities which will be taken into consideration:

- Meeting the expectations and needs of the client,
- Creating a modern precedent for similar conversion projects in the local area,
- Producing a simple but modernistic design,
- Maximising natural light entering the new design proposal,
- Respecting the neighbouring properties and retaining privacy through good design,
- Proving the local area with two new residential flats in an ever-increasing local housing demand,

7. Proposal

FOX-AD LTD has worked closely with the client to establish a design proposal which meets their expectations and 'wishlist' for converting an existing commercial property to provide residential & commercial spaces to purchase.

The commercial property Da Vinci Italian has been on the market for approx. 2 years now with several estate agents however no interest has been shown. This has resulted in the client seeking alternative proposals in order to sell the property.

The proposed drawings appended to this document as listed in Section 01 clearly show the newly proposed residential flats and a section of the commercial unit retained for future businesses. The proposed drawings also show the minor external alterations required to suit the new internal layout.

Access:

The existing access points to the building via Market Square and Lancashire Road will remain, with a new access point into the retained section of Commercial Unit as shown.

The existing access to the current restaurant will form the new entrance to both flats.

New access doors with glazed panels will be fitted to suit new and existing opening sizes.

Appearance:

The proposal to provide 2 new flats and a smaller commercial unit is predominantly an internal conversion. However, minor external alterations are proposed which will improve the overall appearance of the building.

Two new windows similar in scale and appearance will replace the smaller array of windows to the Lancashire Road elevation, and an existing window opening will be utilised to form a new access point to the retained section of commercial unit to the Market Square elevation.

Landscaping:

Due to the proposal being internal no new landscaping is proposed. However, an existing basement access within the pavement on Lancashire Road will be removed and filled in.

A smaller lightwell located to the Market Square elevation will be replaced with a toughened glazed rooflight. The glazing will allow natural light to enter the basement area of Flat 02.

Layout:

Please refer to the image below which clarifies the internal layout.

In summary the new dwelling comprises:



(Fig.04 – Proposed Floor Plans – see drawing 24-31-P-05)

Scale:

The scale of the proposed development as shown on the proposed drawings is all internal. No new building extensions are proposed.

Flat 01 – situated on the Ground Floor only will achieve 52m² of internal area. Suitable for 2 people.

Flat 02 – situated on the Ground & Basement floor levels will achieve an overall internal floor area of 124m². Suitable for 4 people.

Refuse:

An internal refuse area within the entrance lobby will be provided for the new residents as shown within the proposed design drawings. This area will be ventilated and regularly maintained.

This method is similar to the existing arrangements serving the upper floors and the current commercial unit.

Cycle Storage:

No dedicated cycle stores have been shown as the building has no external courtyards or amenity in which to accommodate them. There would however be room for cycles within each flat if required by the occupier/owner.

Due to its town centre location the new residents would be able to walk to all local amenities and use public transport for longer journeys.

A bus stop is located in Market Square with several others in the immediate area and the Millom train station a short walk away.

Sustainability:

Following receipt of the planning approval it is the client's intention to construct the proposed extensions to a high standard by exceeding the thermal U-values set out by Approved Document L1 of the building regulations.

8. Planning Policies

This section of the document aims to demonstrate how the proposal meets each planning policy as referred to us within the pre-application feedback.

The below points are from the Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028:

1. **Policy SS1 – Improving the Housing Offer & Policy SS2 – Sustainable Housing Growth**
 - This proposal will contribute 2 new residential flats to the local housing need.
 - The proposal is within a town centre location which would be attractive to several local builders to carry out.
2. **Policy SS3 – Housing Needs, Mix and Affordability**
 - The proposal aims to provide a 1-bedroom flat and a 2-bedroom spacious duplex over 2 floors. The clientele for both properties can range from disabled to family use.
3. **Policy ER4 – Land and Premises for Economic Development**
 - The client has been patient over the last few years trying to sell the Ground & Basement floor sections of the building as a commercial premises.
 - The proposal to provide 2 flats and a smaller commercial unit is a sustainable and economic way to provide Millom Town with residential and commercial units to rent or buy in the future.

4. Policy ER6 – Location of Employment

- Millom Town has been identified as one of the Boroughs Key Service Centres, and the proposal to provide a commercial unit will generate some form of employment to the local community.
- No negative transport impacts will come about following the implementation of this proposal.
- Floodrisk will not be increased with this proposal.
- Occupiers of the new residential flats will be able to work from home if required due to internal space achieved.

5. Policy ER7 – Principal Town Centre, Key Service Centres, Local Centres and other service areas: Roles and Functions

- Providing/retaining a section of commercial use within this proposal aims to protect the service facilities provided in Millom Town by increasing employment and providing 2 new residential flats to the local housing supply.

6. Policy ER9 – The Key Service Centres, Local Centres and other small centres

- The new commercial unit could be used as a shop which would contribute positively to Market Square.
- As the client has opted to retire and sell the premises the new proposed mixed use would reduce the risk of this unit being vacant.

7. Policy ER11 – Developing Enterprise and Skills

- Due to the proposal aiming to provide a commercial unit, the possibilities for different types of business to occupy the space is encouraging.
- A smaller premises such as this with existing infrastructure due to its current use as a restaurant would attract a wide range of business from office based to food enterprises.

8. Policy T1 – Improving Accessibility and Transport

- As previously mentioned in this document, parking will not be provided due to the building's location and the fact that no parking currently exists for the property.
- Public transport and the use of cycles is encouraged with new and future users advised to walk to local amenities if it is possible to do so.
- Local public transport routes including Bus Stops and the Train Station are within a short walking distance away and would not negatively impact on the occupier/user of the residential and commercial units.

9. Policy ENV1 – Flood Risk and Risk Management

- The proposal to convert this section of the building into a mix of residential and commercial units will not increase the flood risk.
- Existing drainage will be retained and unaffected.

10. Policy ENV3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- The proposal does not impact on any green spaces/habitat at all and therefore would be exempt from the BNG assessment requirements.
- The proposal would impact on less than 25m of habitat and therefore should be considered exempt.

11. Policy ENV4 – Heritage Assets

- As demonstrated within Section 09 of this document. The proposal by its nature of works will not impact on local Heritage Assets.

12. Policy ENV5 – Protecting and Enhancing the Borough's Landscapes

- By the nature of this proposal and location within Millom Town Centre, the proposed works will not detract from the distinctive characteristics of the area.

13. Policy DM3 – Safeguarding Employment Areas

- Although the proposal removes part of a commercial unit, a smaller unit is retained for future business use.
- The client has tried to sell the commercial unit entity however after 2 years and no interest the decision was made to implement an element of residential to the areas shown within the proposed drawings.
- The proposal for a smaller commercial unit may attract smaller businesses which see the size being much more suited to their needs.
- Therefore, employment opportunities will still be possible subject to the occupier of the commercial unit.

14. Policy DM10 – Achieving Quality of Place

- As the proposal is predominantly internal for this proposal the space planning for each residential unit exceeds the internal space areas as defined by the National Space standards.
- Architectural features of the existing West County Hotel building will be un-affected and improved to the Lancashire Road elevation.
- Security has been considered by design with both residential and commercial units accessed by a locked and secure entrance and secondary secure access doors to each unit.
- Cycle & Waste storage has been considered and implemented.

15. Policy DM11 – Sustainable Development Standards

- Due to the proposal being an internal conversion, the existing surface water drainage system will be un-affected and remain as existing.
- Energy efficiency will be achieved by the conversion being completed to a high standard meeting the requirements set out in Approved Document L of the Building Regulations.
- The proposal to convert the existing commercial space to achieve 2 flats and a smaller commercial unit is a sustainable way of providing 2 new dwellings to the housing supply and an opportunity for a smaller 'start-up' business to provide employment to the local community.

16. Policy DM12 – Standards of New Residential Developments

- As other residential units within this building at the upper floor levels, car parking is not provided. However, the building is ideally situated to promote public transport and encourage future residents to walk or cycle to local amenities.
- Public space is not provided within the building, however it is located within a short walk away from open green spaces and parks.

17. Policy DM22 – Accessible Developments

- Flat 01 forming part of this proposal would be ideally suited for a disabled user. A level access will be retained off of Market Square with all internal doors and hallways sized to meet the requirements of Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.
- Public transport access is achieved via Market Square Bus routes, and the local train station is a short walk away.
- No additional measures will be required with regards to traffic speeds due to the buildings position in the town centre. Speeds along St. Georges Road and Lancashire Road are 20mph.

18. Policy DM24 – Development Proposal and Flood Risk

- As this is an existing building a flood risk assessment will not be required. All proposed works are internal. The method of removing surface water will be retained.

19. Policy DM25 – Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species

- The proposed works for this application are all internal apart from new external windows and doors.
- The proposal does not impact on any green spaces/habitat at all and therefore would be exempt from the BNG assessment requirements.

20. Policy DM26 – Landscaping

- No new landscaping is proposed due to the site boundary being restricted to a building footprint and no external space.
- In terms of the built landscape, the existing building features will be retained and where 'new windows are required', aim to contribute to improve the visual appearance of the existing building.

21. Policy DM27 – Built Heritage and Archaeology

- As demonstrated within Section 09 of this document. The proposal by its nature of works will not impact on local Heritage Assets.
- New windows and doors which compliment the architectural style of the building will be installed should this proposal receive planning approval.

The below points are from the Emerging Local Plan:

1. Strategic Policy DS1PU: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
2. Strategic Policy DS2PU: Reducing the impacts of development on Climate Change
3. Strategic Policy DS3PU: Settlement Hierarchy
4. Strategic Policy DS4PU: Settlement Boundaries
5. Strategic Policy DS5PU: Planning Obligations
6. Policy DS6PU: Design and Development Standards
7. Policy DS7PU: Hard and Soft Landscaping
8. Strategic Policy DS8PU: Reducing Flood Risk
9. Policy DS9PU: Sustainable Drainage
10. Policy DS11PU - Protecting Air Quality
11. Strategic Policy H1PU: Improving the Housing Offer
12. Strategic Policy H2PU: Housing Requirement
13. Strategic Policy H3PU: Housing delivery
14. Strategic Policy H4PU: Distribution of Housing
15. Strategic Policy H5PU: Housing Allocations
16. Policy H6PU: New Housing Development
17. Policy H7PU: Housing Density and Mix Strategic
18. Strategic Policy E1PU: Economic Growth
19. Strategic Policy E2PU: Location of Employment
20. Strategic Policy E5PU: Employment Sites and Allocations
21. Strategic Policy N1PU: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity
22. Strategic Policy N2PU: Local Nature Recovery Networks
23. Strategic Policy N3PU: Biodiversity Net Gain
24. Strategic Policy N6PU: Landscape Protection
25. Policy CO4PU - Sustainable Travel

26. Policy CO5PU - Transport Hierarchy

27. Policy CO7PU - Parking Standards and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

Descriptions on how the application proposal meets the above policy criterion have been carefully written within the 21 policies from the Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028.

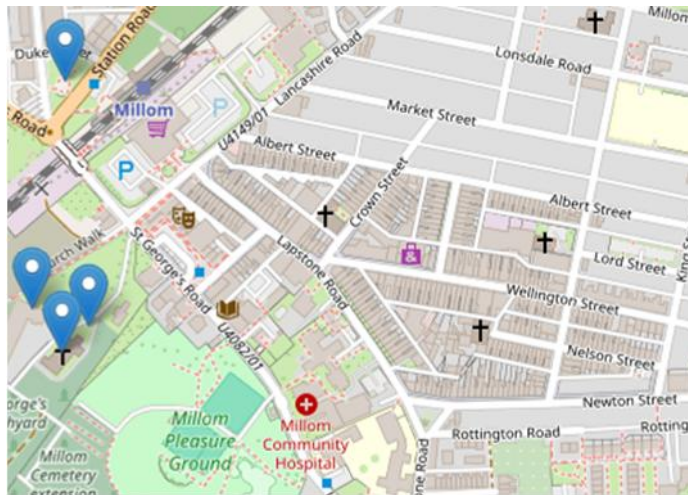
Although policies are not the same, we feel they are similar and in order to describe how each policy is met requires repetition which is unnecessary.

9. Heritage Statement:

As per Section 02 of this document, the site for this application is situated central of Millom Town on the corner of Lancashire Road & St. Georges Road to the perimeter of Market Square, located at Ground & Basement floor levels of the West County Hotel building.

As per Fig.02, the site also resides within the Millom Conservation Area.

Millom Town has four Heritage Assets/Listed Buildings or monuments worth noting which are located West/South-West of the application site and are highlighted within the image below.



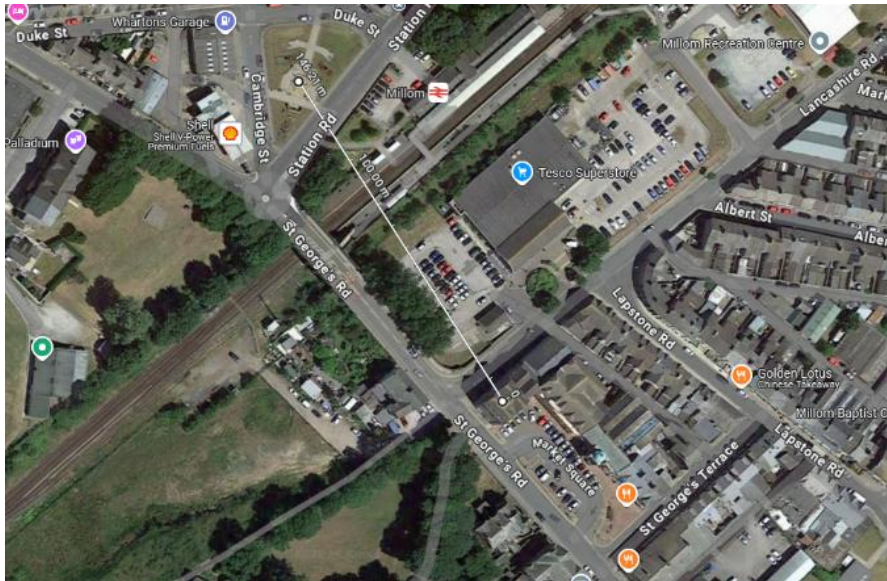
(Fig. 05 – Extract from website (<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/search/?q=millom>) showing local listed buildings/monuments within the local area

From North to South on the above images the local Heritage Assets are as follows:

1. War Memorial – Grade II Listed.
2. Former Vicarage to North of St. Georges Church – Grade II Listed.
3. War Memorial Immediately to the North of St. Georges Church – Grade II Listed.
4. Church of St. George – Grade II Listed.

Impact on Heritage Assets:

Located approx. 150m North-West of the War Memorial (item 01 above), and approx. 120m North-East of the former vicarage, war memorial, and Church of St. George the proposed application site is considered to have virtually no impact on the local Heritage Assets.



(Fig. 06 – Distance to the War Memorial – Item 01 above)



(Fig. 07 – Distance to Former Vicarage, Memorial, and Church of St. George – Items 02-04 above)

Preserving & Respecting Heritage Assets:

The proposed works seeking planning approval are predominantly internal with no new area/built form proposed to the existing building fabric.

All external changes proposed are minor and consist of new windows and external doors which will be in keeping with the existing materials and style of the building.

Due to the distances from the Heritage Assets and the fact that they are out of public view from the application site, we consider the proposed works to be minor in scale thus preserving and respecting the immediate surrounding properties and local Heritage Assets.

10. Conclusion

This Design Access & Heritage Statement details how the proposal to convert an existing commercial premises to provide a mixed use development will sit well within the application site, and provide the local area with two residential flats and a commercial property for new business, with virtually no impact on the local community of Millom and its Heritage.

Key aspects of the proposal are as follows:

- Careful consideration and attention to detail has been applied to the design and siting of the proposal within the curtilage of the client's ownership boundary.
- Consideration of the new access points have been demonstrated.
- Careful review of the pre-application feedback has been demonstrated by implementing a proposal which was preferred by the planning officer.
- Privacy has been retained by good design.
- Security has been provided by good design.
- A design for a building conversion which requires minimal external alterations has been achieved.
- Careful consideration to the internal layout has been demonstrated.
- Materials which will complement the character of the area have been specified.
- Residential & Commercial units have been provided to add to an increasing housing and small business premises demand.
- Planning Policies relevant to this proposal have been met.

The proposal to convert an existing restaurant to 2 flats and a smaller commercial unit is the result of no local demand for a larger commercial unit. The fact that the client has patiently waited for prospective purchasers for 2 years to retire from the family business is a credit to them.

Clearly the local area need for larger commercial spaces is not required.

There is however a need for residential properties within a Town Centre location, and the added benefit of achieving a smaller commercial unit which could be used by a range of local businesses and possible business start-ups demonstrates how the proposal would have a positive impact on the local community and therefore should be approved.