Planning Statement

Proposed Residential Development to the Upper Floors

9 The Pavement St Ives, PE27 5AD

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1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by **Graham Handley Architects Ltd.** in support of the planning and listed building application for the proposed redevelopment of the upper floors at **9 The Pavement, St Ives**, into residential units. The statement sets out the planning justification for the scheme and provides a detailed assessment of the proposed development's potential impacts, as well as the mitigation strategies that will be incorporated to address any concerns.

The application seeks to bring underutilised space back into active use, responding to the recognised need for additional housing within the local area, while retaining the commercial vibrancy of the ground-floor retail unit. The upper floors of the building, previously used as office space, have remained vacant since March 2023, despite active marketing efforts over a two-year period. This sustained vacancy highlights the diminishing demand for office accommodation of this nature in the town centre, further reinforcing the need for alternative uses, such as residential conversion, to ensure the long-term viability of the building.

The proposed residential units will be sensitively integrated into the existing structure, ensuring the preservation of the building's historical and architectural significance. Minimal alterations are proposed to the principal elevations and all works will be designed with due regard to the surrounding conservation area. The proposal includes only minor external changes and internal alterations to adapt the upper floors for residential use.

The statement further outlines the potential impacts of the development, including its effect on the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings, neighbour amenity, parking, and sustainability. It also identifies the mitigation measures that will be adopted, including soundproofing, careful design of external alterations, and the provision of secure cycle storage to promote sustainable transport.

Overall, the proposed development represents a sustainable and context-sensitive solution, addressing housing needs while enhancing the long-term viability of **9 The Pavement** as an active and integral part of the town centre.

1.1 Location

9 The Pavement is sited within conservation zone 1.2 of the St Ives Conservation area.

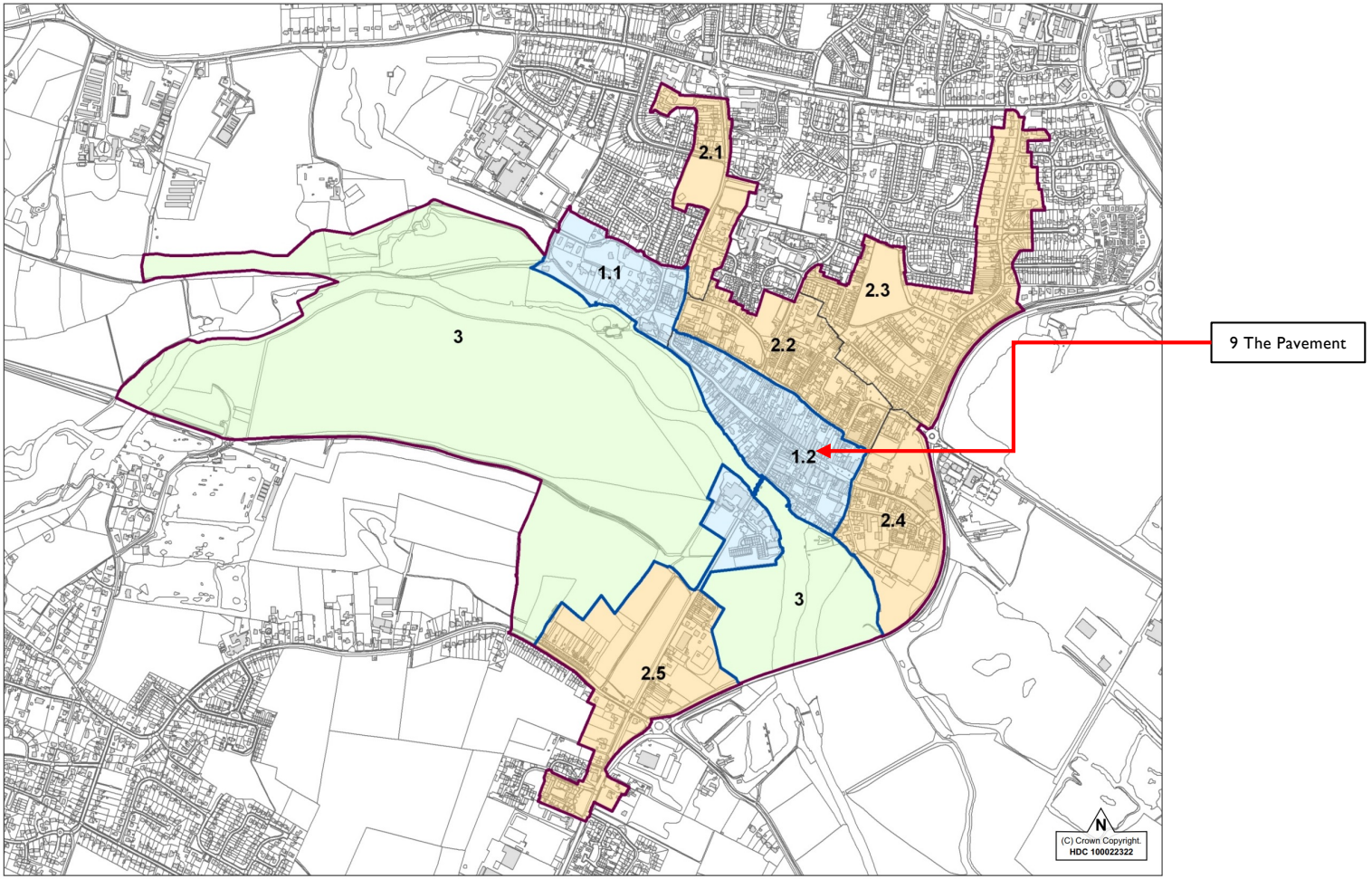


Figure 1 – Map of St Ives showing Conservation area and its subdivisions.

1.2 Previous planning consent at 9 The Pavement

In 1989, planning consent was granted for the conversion of the building to accommodate a shop and storage areas on the ground floor, with a manager's flat and offices on the upper floors, along with three dwellings and car parking (Ref. No: 8901332FUL). The approval allowed for the mixed-use development of the building, combining commercial and residential elements. However, due to the considerable age of the application, no associated documents or supporting information are available within the planning records. This has made it challenging to obtain detailed historical data on the exact nature of the original approval and any subsequent alterations made to the property.

2.0 Existing Context and Proposed Development

2.1 Existing Context

9 The Pavement is a Grade II listed building located in the heart of St Ives, Cambridgeshire. Constructed in the early to mid-19th century, the building is characterised by its three-storey rusticated stucco façade, cornice, and recessed windows. It forms part of a cohesive group of listed buildings, including Nos. 5 to 10 (consecutive) and No. 12, collectively known as The Corn Exchange, which contribute to the architectural and historical significance of the area.

The building currently houses a retail unit on the ground floor, with the upper floors previously designated for office use. However, these upper floors have remained vacant since March 2023, despite being actively marketed for over two years, indicating a sustained lack of demand for this type of commercial accommodation in the local area.

Given the ongoing vacancy and the recognised need for additional housing within the area, there is a strong planning justification for the proposed change of use to residential. The conversion of these underutilised upper floors into residential units would support local housing targets, contribute to the efficient use of previously developed land, and enhance the long-term viability of the building. The ground floor retail unit is to be retained in its existing form and use, ensuring continuity of commercial activity at street level.

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposal involves internal alterations and minimal external changes, all of which will be carried out with careful consideration to preserve the building's historic character. The development will not result in harm to the character or appearance of the surrounding listed buildings or the broader conservation area.

In summary, the proposed development at 9 The Pavement seeks to bring underutilised upper floors back into active use, contributing to the local housing supply while maintaining the building's historic integrity and supporting the vitality of the town centre.

2.3 National Planning Policy Framework

The proposal is in full accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly in relation to promoting sustainable development and enhancing the historic environment:

The NPPF highlights the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposed conversion of underutilised upper floors into residential units maximises the efficient use of previously developed land, contributing positively to the town's housing supply while maintaining the vitality of the street.

It calls for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The proposal will ensure that any internal changes are sympathetic to the building's heritage value, and no changes will be made to the external façade that would detract from its architectural significance.

The NPPF also advocates for the conservation of biodiversity and energy-efficient buildings. The development incorporates measures to improve the building's energy efficiency, contributing to sustainability goals.

2.4 Local Planning Policies

The proposed development also aligns with the **Local Plan policies** set out by **St Ives District Council**. These policies are crucial for ensuring that the development respects local character, heritage, and sustainability goals:

Housing Delivery: The proposal addresses the pressing need for residential accommodation within the area by converting previously underused commercial space into high-quality living units. The scheme contributes to meeting local housing targets and offers a sustainable use of land within a highly accessible town centre location.

Protection of Heritage Assets: Given the listed status of **9 The Pavement**, the development complies with Policy HE1 by ensuring that all alterations respect and preserve the historic fabric of the building. The internal alterations have been designed to minimise any impact on the building's historic character, and the external fabric of the building will remain largely unchanged.

High-Quality Design: The proposal demonstrates a high standard of design, with alterations being carefully planned to respect the historic and architectural value of the building. New windows will be introduced thoughtfully, ensuring both energy efficiency and architectural harmony.

Sustainability in Development: The proposal meets the requirements of this policy by enhancing the energy performance of the building. Measures such as improved insulation, energy-efficient lighting, and natural ventilation will be incorporated, reducing the building's environmental impact and contributing to the locality's sustainability goals.

The proposed development at 9 The Pavement, St Ives aligns with the relevant national and local planning policies, demonstrating that it is a sustainable and appropriate scheme for the site. The conversion of the upper floors into residential units will contribute to local housing needs, make efficient use of underutilised space, and ensure the building's long-term viability without compromising its historic value. The proposal also supports the principles of high-quality design and sustainability, in line with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the St Ives Local Plan. We believe this development will enhance both the building and its surrounding environment, contributing positively to the future of the town centre.

3.0 Potential Impacts and Mitigation

In developing this proposal, careful consideration has been given to the potential impacts on the surrounding context, particularly regarding the site's location within a **conservation area** and its inclusion as part of a **listed building group**. The following aspects have been assessed and addressed accordingly:

1. Loss of Commercial/Office Space

While the building is currently designated as office space on the upper floors, these have remained vacant since March 2023 despite active and ongoing marketing efforts by Eddison's for over two years. This clearly demonstrates a lack of commercial demand. The proposal brings underutilised space back into beneficial use while retaining the ground floor retail unit, thereby supporting the ongoing vitality of the town centre and the principle of mixed-use development.

2. Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

The proposal involves predominantly internal alterations, with only minor external changes that are limited in scale and sensitive in design. These have been carefully considered to ensure that they do not detract from the building's architectural character or the wider streetscape. Materials and detailing will be in keeping with the historic setting, thereby preserving the significance of the conservation area and the visual integrity of the building.

3. Residential Amenity

The proposed residential units have been designed to ensure high-quality living conditions, with adequate access to natural light, ventilation, and internal space. Consideration has been given to the proximity of the commercial unit below, and appropriate soundproofing measures will be incorporated as required to protect future occupants from potential noise disturbance.

4. Servicing and Waste Management

The design includes appropriate and discreet provision for waste and recycling storage, in accordance with local authority standards. These facilities will be located to ensure they do not negatively impact the setting of the building or its neighbours and will not interfere with commercial operations.

3.0 Potential Impacts and Mitigation

5. Parking and Access

Given the site's central and highly accessible location, the development does not propose any change to the existing number of parking spaces, reflecting its proximity to public transport and local amenities. Secure cycle storage will be provided to encourage active travel and support a shift toward more sustainable modes of transport, in line with national and local planning policy.

6. Flood Risk and Drainage

The site lies within Flood Zone 2.
The proposed development does not increase the existing building footprint, nor does it involve any significant alterations to the current drainage arrangements. The conversion of the upper floors does not introduce any additional flood vulnerability and is therefore considered acceptable in planning terms. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is currently being undertaken by MTC Engineering to support the application.

7. Sustainability

The proposal includes measures aimed at improving the energy efficiency of the building, such as enhanced insulation and the use of energy-efficient lighting and heating systems. Although the building is a listed structure, efforts will be made to ensure that these sustainability measures are incorporated in a way that respects the building's historic fabric and character. Through these sustainable design strategies, the proposal contributes to the long-term resilience of the town and reduces its overall carbon footprint

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed development at **9 The Pavement, St Ives**, seeks to enhance both the quality and aesthetic value of the historic building, while ensuring its continued viability for future generations. The carefully considered internal alterations, including the removal and replacement of partitions, will not detract from the building's historic significance. Rather, they will improve the internal environment, increasing the desirability of the space, reducing energy consumption, and stabilising internal conditions, all of which contribute to the building's long-term preservation.

The insertion of three new windows is a key element of the proposal, providing enhanced natural light, ventilation, and energy efficiency, while being executed in a way that respects the building's historic integrity. All proposed changes will be carried out with the utmost care to preserve the building's architectural heritage, ensuring that any alterations are sympathetic to its historical fabric.

The proposals have been reviewed and discussed with the Conservation Officer assigned to the project, who expressed broad support for the scheme. In response to the officer's comments, minor amendments have been incorporated into the design. These include the retention of key internal period features and the repositioning of the gable end windows to provide sufficient clearance around the existing chimney stack. These adjustments ensure the proposals remain sensitive to the historic character of the building while accommodating the functional requirements of the development.

Additionally, a full flood risk assessment has been carried out by MTC Engineering, who concluded:

"…There are no flood risk or drainage related grounds under The National Planning Policy Framework on which to object to the proposed change of use of the upper floors of 9 The Pavement, St. Ives to provide 4 residential units…"

This redevelopment will breathe new life into previously underutilised spaces, transforming them into functional, modern living areas. The approach strikes a careful balance between safeguarding the building's historical value and introducing contemporary use, contributing to the sustainability and vitality of the site. The proposal aligns with local and national planning policies, and we believe it offers a sustainable and respectful solution that will not only enhance the building's utility but also its contribution to the town's rich architectural heritage.

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