A.J.S ARCHITECTURE



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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT:

ROEBUCK HOUSE, ROEBUCK PLACE, CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH

Roebuck House sits within Roebuck Place, just behind The Roebuck public house on the market place in Chapel-En-Le-Frith. The area is classified as a conservation area within the town, although the building itself does not present a public face within this location as it sits in the corner of the rear courtyard behind the Market Place.

The property in question dates back to the 1920's and is mainly a brick/block rendered construction (which is painted cream) with a industrial sheeted roof construction which may be asbestos cement based. Joinery items are in general rosewood faced upvc double glazed windows and doors, although two windows facing the rear courtyard are still in timber and in general poor condition. Although in a conservation area, some of the surrounding buildings are of questionable architectural merit and use a variety of poor building materials – the facing building within the rear courtyard being a case in point. The building itself is generally in good condition (other than the timber windows to the rear), but needs work to the roof in order to show more respect of its conservation area location.

The building has, up until recently, provided office accommodation over 2 floors. The current owners have however being trying to sell the property since October 2011 with no success. The problem is with the location of the building and its provision for office/commercial use. The property offers no public face (a negative aspect for any potential commercial user) and as it is land locked in boundary terms, it can provide no parking provision for any potential purchaser.

The only interest in the purchase of the property has come from those that may express an interest in a potential domestic use of the building and the relevant permission that would be required for such a change of use. Such a use seems the only logical way forward for any viable use of this building. There is very little call for office space in general at the moment and the issues mentioned before only further serve to count against the future use of office space. The current owners had a member of family using the building for commercial activities before the current attempts at sale and as such the limitation of use had not had to be considered from an open market point of view.

The potential use for domestic purposes does of course not really suffer from the negative aspects that prevent further sale for commercial activities. The lack of a public face within the private courtyard area that is Roebuck Place is a positive from a domestic point of view and the lack of car parking is compensated by the fact that free parking (at all times) is available on both the market place and also further down the hill in the public car park at the end of Roebuck Place. The proximity to town car parks is generally an accepted provision for flats in such locations.

The layout of the building and the internal area on offer would make a change of use conversion to two apartments (one on each floor) a relatively simple project. Two steels sit within the building over the ground and first floors and these seem to provide all the support for the floor and roof structures, hence allowing all the walls within the current building to be studwork and thus meaning they can be simply removed to alter the space inside. The position of the existing windows on the three elevations and the flexibility of the internal space mean that the building can be converted to domestic use on ground and first floors without any external changes. The only works that will be undertaken are to improve the visual appearance of the building and its location in the conservation area. The replacement of the 2 timber windows with rosewood faced upvc (these are private courtyard facing) will mean all windows match and the removal of the existing industrial sheeted roof to make way for new natural blue/grey slates can only be seen as a positive improvement to the building.

It is hoped that these improvement works and the change of use to domestic can be seen as an acceptable and positive way of giving this building a viable future and hence preserve its presence in the conservation area. The proposals will also provide much needed low cost accommodation within the town, without the need for new build.