

Proposed Alterations to Shop Frontages at 481-485 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 4AN

Design & Access Statement

1.0 Stage One - Process & Analysis

1.1 Assessment

The site is located on the high street along Wilmslow Road within the suburb of Withington. It comprises of 0.039 Ha' of land and is currently occupied by a two storey building with further cellar below. There is also a single storey front projection facing Wilmslow Road to back of pavement which have cellars below, these projections typical for such district centre high streets, are occupied by two commercial retail units. The retail uses extend partly within the main building but most of that is vacant. It appears that the building was historically a dwelling, but it is not known when this was last inhabited. The building is not listed but the site is within the Withington Conservation Area and has been identified as a positive contribution to the area.

The site is in a district centre and overlooks Wilmslow Road which provides local facilities and amenities such as shops healthcare and leisure activities. Wilmslow Road is an extremely well served bus route with very regular services to a number of destinations including into central Manchester. Mauldeth Road train station is approx. 0.9 mile east of the site and there is a Metrolink tram stop approx. 0.8 mile south at West Didsbury (easily accessible by bus) so the site is very well serviced by public transport.

The main mass of the building is proposed for refurbishment and provision of 4no. new self-contained apartments with accompanying parking facilities and access via the drive off Parsonage Road, this is being addressed under a separate application, reference no. 125673/FO/2019.

Access is directly off Wilmslow Road into the retail units. Both stores have access to cellar storage to the rear of the shop floor with identified cycle storage included within the shop floor under the associated scheme.



Fig 1 & 2: Front of existing property to Wilmslow Road showing graffiti and general decline



Fig 3: No. 481-483 Wilmslow Road



Fig 4: No. 485 Wilmslow Road



Fig 5 & 6: Stone console ahead stone pilaster, recessed entrance to no. 485



Fig 4: No. 473 Wilmslow Road (identified by BB Heritage Studio for demonstrating historic features)

1.2 Involvement

The applicant has recently purchased the plots and wishes to retain and refurbish the property. The two retail units will be retained in the front projection with cellar spaces below. No. 485 is vacant and a new tenant is to be identified.

1.3 Evaluation

The site is highly sustainable, and the uses sought are not expected to be contentious being existing or historic. There is no intensification in use as this is to remain as existing. Principle issues likely to be involved are security and respecting the conservation area.

1.4 Design

Despite the deterioration and unsympathetic retail adornment the properties do retain some period features. The retail units are framed by stone pilasters with stone consoles over which are most evident in immediate vicinity to 481-485 being less hidden by retail signage here. No. 481-483 has a painted timber sign board and stall riser with a roller shutter box over the glazing and central recessed door. No.485 has a deep sign board reducing the glazing with a recessed door to the right hand side, roller shutter boxing is also visible just over the glazing to the store front. The cornice over the signage remains as existing allowing the stone consoles to remain prominent.

The main building behind the stores consists of a brick façade with brick arch lintels and stone sills and bracketed timber box gutter to the front elevation wrapping around south end. The main roof is pitched with slate finish, chimneys are mostly retained and the retail unit projection is flat roofed with presumably asphalt finish (first floor windows are boarded up).

Stage Two: Proposals

2.0 Use

The proposed use class is to remain retail (class A1 shops), though not relevant to this application the remainder of the building will remain residential use (class C3).

3.0 Amount

As the proposal for the development of 4no. new self-contained apartments is being addressed under a separate application and the most relevant alteration is the realignment of the door to no 485 Wilmslow Road there is no increase proposed.

4.0 Layout

The layout of both stores will remain as existing with the associated alterations as shown in application reference no. 125673/FO/2019; removing the direct access from no. 485 to the rear main mass and the inclusion of cycle storage on the shop floor.

5.0 Scale

The scale of the stores are to remain as existing.

The scale of the signage board over no. 483 Wilmslow Road is to be reduced in depth and raised to improve consistency along the block in accordance with recommendations being set out in the upcoming Framework.

6.0 Landscaping

N/A

7.0 Appearance

The storefront to 481-483 will remain relatively as existing with the careful removal of graffiti to the sign board.

It is proposed to reduce the overall depth of and raise the signage board to no. 485 Wilmslow Road to be in keeping with the more consistent fascia depth present on the other stores along the terrace, reinstating glazing below in its place. The new glazing will be ppc coated aluminium framed. The new sign board will be painted timber board with moulded edge surround, colour tbc, ready to receive the new painted company signage. The cornice above the sign board will remain as existing. The roller shutter boxing will continue to be external to the store but will be hidden behind the signage so as to not hide architectural details whilst also addressing a concern of visible boxing raised in the heritage baseline document. The front door to the store is to be brought forward in line with the existing glazing to create a more uniformed shop frontage as part of the terrace.

The stone consoles between the stores will be retained and restored.

It is proposed to re-implement the cast iron railings over the shopfronts, as is currently present over no. 473 'Barbour Grooming', recommended as a 'Potential Enhancement' in the baseline heritage document and identified on drawing 'Block 06 BBHS_SK004 June 2019' which is visible in the accompanying Conservation Statement.

Restoration of the remaining main mass of the property, including the removal of graffiti and refurbishing the roof etc. is addressed in the associated application, reference no. 125673/FO/2019.

8.0 Access

Access to the stores will remain as existing from Wilmslow Road. The entrance to no.485 is proposed to be widened nominally to 1m wide.

Waste and recycling bin storage will remain as existing. This has been addressed further in the associated application reference no. 125673/FO/2019, which, should it be approved will be an improvement on the existing provision of waste storage.

9.0 Sustainability

The site is located in a highly sustainable location in an established settlement. It is amidst the main commercial core that is tightly knit and strongly defines the edges of Wilmslow Road with few to no vacant plots within the area. Updating the condition and appearance of the store front will make the prime commercial location more appealing to a tenant, having the store occupied will contribute to the town's commerce and overall environment. An occupied store will be a positive contribution to the village enhancing the vitality of the area which comes hand in hand with enabling a sustainable town.

The central location and ample public transport to and along Wilmslow Road and the application site has been identified above already, being on a well-served bus route this all contributes to pedestrian footfall to the site and town centre.

10.0 Equality

Level access into the stores is existing and will be maintained and the entrance to no. 485 Wilmslow Road is proposed to be widened with the realignment of the door making it more amenable to wheelchair access. Normal provisions within building regulations would be met to provide for visual distinction of doors and such. Manifestation will be provided on the new glazing to no. 485.