DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT 01.06.2025

BAREL ARCHITECTURE

PROJECT
FRONT ELEVATION CHANGES
AND NEW SIGN DESIGN

AT
453 WILMSLOW ROAD
M20 4AN, MANCHESTER

BAREL

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INTRODUCTION



This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany the Application for Full Planning Permission for the refurbishment and adaptation of an existing building, formerly operating as a bank, into a traditional café offering food and beverages.
The site is located within the Withington Village Conservation Area, and the proposed works have been carefully designed to respect and enhance the character and appearance of the area. Special consideration has been given to ensure that any alterations, particularly to the shopfront, are sympathetic to the historic fabric and contribute positively to the streetscape.
The following documents have been submitted as part of this application:

- Existing Plans, Elevations, and Sections,
- Proposed Plans, Elevations, and Sections,
- Location Plan and Site Plan,
- Photographs of the Site.

The proposed design approach aims to sensitively adapt the building's existing features, preserve its heritage significance, and support the vitality of the local centre.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

ARCHITECTURAL APPROACH

The property is located at 453 Wilmslow Road, within the Withington Village Conservation Area. It is a two-storey building that was formerly occupied by a bank for several decades. The original layout includes a deep plan extending towards the rear of the site, with the ground floor serving as the banking hall and the upper floor likely used for ancillary offices or staff areas. As a result of its previous use, the front elevation features extensive glazing at ground level, characteristic of mid-to-late twentieth-century commercial architecture. While functional for a bank, the fully glazed frontage lacks the traditional solidity and architectural rhythm typically found along Wilmslow Road.

The proposed refurbishment seeks to reintroduce a more traditional frontage treatment, better aligned with the surrounding historic buildings. The first-floor window openings will be carefully in-filled to create a smooth, continuous wall plane. This intervention will reduce visual fragmentation and provide a cleaner, more unified appearance, reinstating a sense of enclosure and solidity that reflects the historic character of the street.

At ground floor level, a new arched entrance will be introduced, drawing inspiration from traditional architectural forms seen in historic shopfronts and public buildings. The arch will provide a strong focal point for the building, creating a welcoming and distinctive entrance that enhances the streetscape.

Above the entrance, a signage panel is proposed, carefully proportioned and positioned to respect the architectural balance of the front elevation. The design and materials for the signage will be selected to ensure compatibility with the wider Conservation Area, avoiding excessive prominence or visual disruption.

The overall approach seeks to sensitively adapt the former bank building for its new use as a traditional café, enhancing the street scene and contributing to the ongoing vitality of Withington Village. The proposed works aim to complement the established character of the area while bringing a refreshed and considered appearance to this part of Wilmslow Road.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Use

The building was previously used as a bank, with a typical commercial layout extending to the rear. The proposed scheme seeks to adapt the building for use as a traditional café, providing a more community-oriented function. The café will offer a range of traditional foods and beverages, introducing a welcoming environment while maintaining respect for the building's historic setting.

Access

Access to the property will remain through the existing principal entrance on Wilmslow Road. No alterations are proposed to the main point of access, ensuring continuity with the building's established street presence. Internally, minor adjustments will be made to suit the café layout, but these will not affect the external appearance or accessibility.

Structural

The existing structure of the building will largely be retained. A minor structural intervention is proposed at the rear of the property, where a small supporting column will be added to enhance stability. This change is minimal and will not have any visual impact on the external appearance of the building or the surrounding Conservation Area.

Materials

The current exterior is finished in a white render. As part of the refurbishment, the building will be re-rendered in a sand-coloured finish, providing a softer, more natural tone that harmonises with the surrounding historic fabric. Internally, the same sand colour palette will be adopted to maintain visual consistency and a warm, traditional atmosphere throughout the café.
In addition, a kitchen extract system will be installed at the rear of the property to manage cooking fumes and odours. This system will be designed to operate with low visual impact, maintaining the integrity of the Conservation Area while ensuring environmental standards are met.

Sustainability

The project has been designed to minimise structural intervention and to reuse the existing building fabric wherever possible. By retaining the main structure and limiting new construction to essential elements only, the proposal promotes sustainable building practices and reduces environmental impact. Energy efficiency will be enhanced through careful material selection and improved internal layouts that optimise natural light and ventilation.

CONCLUSION



The proposed refurbishment and adaptation of 453 Wilmslow Road has been carefully designed to make a positive contribution to the character and vitality of Withington Village. Great care has been taken to respect the historic setting, ensuring that all alterations are sympathetic to the architectural qualities of the Conservation Area.

The proposals seek to enhance the building's appearance through considered material choices, a restrained design approach, and minimal structural intervention. By introducing a traditional café use, the scheme will support the ongoing vibrancy of the local high street, offering a welcoming and appropriately scaled addition to the neighbourhood.

Throughout the design process, close attention has been paid to the relationship between the building and its context, maintaining the proportions, scale, and visual integrity of the original structure. The proposal represents a sensitive and sustainable adaptation of an existing building, aligned with both heritage principles and contemporary community needs.

Yours sincerely,

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