

Application No:	3/21/19/034
Parish	Minehead
Application Type	Full Planning Permission
Case Officer:	Alex Lawrey
Grid Ref	Easting: 296806 Northing: 146284
Applicant	Avison Young
Proposal	Demolition of commercial laundry building to construct 7 apartments and 164 sqm of retail / financial and professional services, café / office (A1, A2, A3, B1) with associated cycle parking, refuse facilities, infrastructure and landscaping
Location	Julians Laundry, Market House Lane, Minehead, TA24 5NW

Recommendation

Recommended decision: Conditional approval.

Recommended Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A3) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0001 P3 LOCATION PLAN
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0050 P1 PROPOSED SITE PLAN
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0200 P1 PLAN LEVEL 00-PLOT A
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0201 P1 PLAN LEVEL + 01 PLOT A
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0202 P1 PLAN LEVEL + 02 PLOT A
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0203 P1 PLAN LEVEL 00, +01 & +02 PLOT A
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0204 P1 ELEVATIONS -PLOT A
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0205 P1 COURTYARD ELEVATIONS -PLOT A
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TBC-A0210 P1 ROOF PLAN -PLOT A
 (A1) DRNO 3377-TCB-A3020 P1 PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS PLOT

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 Prior to the construction of the building/extension samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained as such. Notwithstanding drawing number 33773-TBC--A0204 P1 the east elevation shall use rubble stone and details or material samples shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority as per the requirements detailed above.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the building/area.

- 4 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, access to covered cycle parking, numbers and spaces to be fully in accordance with a detailed scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will show a minimum number of 15no. of secure cycle storage spaces to be provided to serve the development.

Reason:

In the interests of promoting sustainable transport

- 5 During the construction phase the applicant shall ensure that all vehicles leaving the site are in such condition as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. In particular (but without prejudice to the foregoing), efficient means shall be installed, maintained and employed for cleaning the wheels of all lorries leaving the site, details of which shall have been agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority and fully implemented prior to commencement and thereafter maintained until the use of the construction of the site discontinues.

Reason:

In the interests of highway safety

- 6 No development shall commence unless a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plan. The plan shall include:
- Construction vehicle movements;
 - Construction operation hours;
 - Construction vehicular routes to and from site;
 - Construction delivery hours;
 - Expected number of construction vehicles per day;
 - Car parking for contractors;
 - Specific measures to be adopted to mitigate construction impacts in pursuance of the Environmental Code of Construction Practice;
 - A scheme to encourage the use of Public Transport amongst contractors;
 - and Measures to avoid traffic congestion impacting upon the Strategic Road Network if required.

Reason:

In the interests of amenity and highway safety

- 7 Prior to occupation of the building, works for the disposal of sewage (or

confirmation of connections to the mains sewerage network from the relevant utility company) and surface water drainage shall be provided on the site to serve the development, hereby permitted, in accordance with details that shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be retained and maintained in that form.

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of drainage infrastructure.

- 8 Demolition of buildings may not in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:
- a) a statement in writing from the licensed bat ecologist to the effect that she/he does not consider that the development will require a licence; or
 - b) a copy of the licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the development to go ahead

Reason: In the interests of the strict protection of European protected species and in accordance with policy NH6 of the West Somerset Local Plan

Prior to commencement reason: Any works of demolition could damage or destroy habitats of European protected species.

- 9 The following features will be installed into the structure of Plots A and B:
- a) A Habitat 001 bat roost or similar will be integrated into the structure below the apex on the west elevation's southern gable end at least 4 metres above ground level of Plot A.
 - b) Three Schwegler Type 1A swift boxes or similar) will be integrated into the structure at least 5 metres above ground level, at least 1 metre apart and away from windows on the north elevation of Plot A
 - c) Two Schwegler 1SP house sparrow terraces will be installed under the eaves of a north facing elevation
 - d) A bee brick built into the wall about 1 metre above ground level on the southern elevation of Plots A and B.
- Photographs of the installed features will be submitted to the local planning authority prior to completion of construction

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

- 10 No demolition of buildings or structures shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of buildings for active birds' nests immediately before the buildings are demolished and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason:

In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with policy NH6 of the West Somerset Local Plan

- 11 No works shall be undertaken on site until the Local Planning Authority has first approved in writing details of a programme of access which will be afforded to a named archaeologist to observe and record all ground disturbance during construction (such works to include any geological trial pits, foundations and service trenches). The named archaeologist shall thereafter be allowed access in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason: To enable the remains of archaeological interest which may exist within the site to be appropriately recorded.

Reason for pre-commencement: Any works on site have the potential to disturb archaeological interests.

- 12 Prior to the commencement of demolition operations the developer shall provide written evidence of a contract to build out the development hereby approved. The details of the contract must indicate that works for building the approved development will commence no later than three calendar months after the completion of demolition works and any associated ground clearance.

Reason:

To prevent a gap being formed after demolition in the Conservation Area

Informative notes to applicant

1 STATEMENT OF POSITIVE WORKING

In determining this application the Local Planning Authority considers it has complied with the requirements of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Pre-application discussion and correspondence took place between the applicant and the Local Planning Authority, which positively informed the design/nature of the submitted scheme. During the consideration of the application [issues/concerns were raised by a statutory consultee / neighbour in respect of xxx]. The Local Planning Authority contacted the applicant and sought amendments to the scheme to address this issue/concern and amended plans were submitted. For the reasons given above and expanded upon in the planning officer's report, the application was considered acceptable and planning permission was granted.

- 2 The Highway Authority would like to remind the applicant that they should seek to alter the Traffic Regulation Order in order to remove any confusion regarding parking arrangements in front of the access junction. This will help to guarantee the rights of residents to safely access the site in perpetuity.

Proposal

This application seeks consent for the demolition of a commercial laundry building to construct 7 apartments with 164m² of retail, financial & professional services, cafe / office (A1, A2, A3, B1) with associated cycle parking, refuse facilities, infrastructure and landscaping, at Julians Laundry, Market House Lane, Minehead.

Site Description

The site is a long commercial building in central Minehead with a gable end facing the road in brick and stone, with double-doors to the front. To the side of the building is a pedestrian lane leading up North Hill. A two storey element of the building is further up the hill. Market House Lane is narrow with yellow lines and there is only very limited vehicular access. The site is in current use as a commercial laundry service and has had previous uses which appear to be related to a garage and fruit and vegetable warehouse. The building maybe Edwardian but has little architectural merit. It is set within the Wellington Square Conservation Area and is close to listed buildings and the listed market cross to the east on Market House Lane. No internal inspection of the site was undertaken due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Relevant Planning History

3/21/83/070 - additional use of the premises for ancillary retail sale of fruit and vegetables - refused - 24/06/1983

3/21/88/120 - vacant stores Market House lane: residential development - granted - 26/05/1988

3/21/96/113 - change of use from vacant garage/warehouse to laundry - granted - 25/07/1996

Consultation Responses

Minehead Town Council -

Minehead Town Council has concerns about access for construction vehicles and, if the application is granted, the residents access and lack of parking facilities for such a development. As this building is in a Conservation Area, it has concerns regarding the style of the building not being in keeping with that of the rest of this most unique and ancient area of Minehead. The committee also feels it is an overdevelopment of the site. The committee recommends that a site visit should be carried out by the SW&T committee, so that it can see first hand the issues such as the area and access to the site.

Comments in response to revised plans: Recommend refusal. RE: West Somerset Local Plan policies NH1 & NH2 concerns regarding: lack of parking, access for construction, height of three storeys, shared amenities, (states spill out for retail space), development not in keeping with local area. Recommend site visit for committee.

Highways Development Control -

Comments have been received from the highway authority which cover access, parking, traffic impact, internal layout and construction matters. The conclusion of

their comments states: The Highway Authority does not object to the principle of development on this site. However there is a lack of clarity regarding the proposals as it pertains to the access junction and access road. The Highways Authority would wish to see a plan indicating the geometry of the proposed layout on Market House Lane, the access junction and the access road before giving their final conclusion.

Comments in response to revised plans:

It is noted that the this proposed is a revised scheme from the original proposal where the Highway Authority originally provided comment dated 20 June 2019. The current proposal is for the demolition of an existing commercial building and erect 7 residential apartments and 164 SQM for a mixed A1, A2, A3, B1 usage. The proposal site lies off the unclassified one way, Market House Lane in Minehead. It is the understanding of the Highway Authority that the existing site currently accommodates 2 vehicle parking spaces and 0 cycle parking spaces for the current use as an active laundry building.

This proposal would see no vehicle spaces provided but a number of cycle spaces to be included as part of the residential and mixed use classification, however the exact number does not appear to of been specified. Cycle parking needs to be provided at a rate of one space per bedroom and a rate of one space per 20m² (on the basis of the mixed use operating completely under A3 classification). All cycle parking needs to be safe, secure and sheltered.

Given the proposal site lies in Zone B of the Somerset Parking Strategy (SPS), the SPS optimum standard for vehicle parking for this proposal is 19 in total (11 for the residential development and 8 for the mixed use classification).

Whilst there are public car parks within Minehead, the LPA should be mindful that the nature of the development proposed without any vehicular parking, in particular the residential development would only encourage the increase the likelihood of informal parking on the local highway network system.

Vehicle parking on Market House Lane appeared to be exercised and given the nature of the carriageway the development proposed may increase this level activity and as such more likely to cause vehicle confliction.

To reiterate from our previous comments dated 20 June 2019 for a previous proposed scheme at the site, the existing access to and from the site is narrow and constrained and offers very limited forward visibility onto Market House Lane where Non-Motorised Users would have to walk on the local carriageway to access the site. It is accepted however, that footfall to and from the site is already exercised given the extant use of the site with no recorded accidents at the site over the past 5 years.

The Highway Authority would like to remind the applicant that ideally, they also seek to alter the TRO in order to remove any confusion regarding parking arrangements in front of the access junction. This would help to guarantee the rights of residents to safely access the site in perpetuity.

With the above in mind, the Highway Authority do not consider the proposal as the most practical in this instance, where sustainable travel opportunities have their limitations. It would appear technically possible for the applicant to provide a level of parking and improve the current access arrangement.

Whilst finely balanced, the LPA will need to decide if the benefits of the scheme outweigh the disbenefits of the development. In the event therefore of planning consent being granted, the conditions are recommended for covered cycle spaces, wheel-washing, disposal of surface water, CEMP and scheme for use of public

transport by contractors.

Tree Officer -

Comments to revised plans: No objections

Conservation Officer -

Has visited the site and noted that there was a pre-app on this case. Questioned whether the applicants justified that no other use can be put to the existing buildings. They could be regarded as being non designated heritage assets. There is some substantial areas of historic stone. Is not convinced by the design solution. There is no clear understanding of the local vernacular even allowing for a contemporary interpretation.

The existing gable facing the road is a strong feature in the street scene in the conservation area. This element should be replicated in the new development. The proportions of the windows in the locality should also be respected.

The Juliet balconies do not have any resonance with the local vernacular and are not appropriate . The officer could not support this proposal in this form .

It is that the applicants should rethink the design and access statement and carry out a more thorough observation of the local traditional built forms.

The new buildings should incorporate a significant proportion of the historic walls

SCC - Ecologist -

An Ecological Impact Assessment of the application site was carried out by the Landmark Practice in February 2019. The application site predominately comprises existing built commercial and residential structures, with some associated amenity landscaping in the residential garden. The garden around the existing residential dwelling (The White House) is quite typical of a residential garden. While it does not include amenity lawn, it has extensive planting beds dominated by a range of ornamental shrub and flower species and numerous potted plants and hanging baskets.

The buildings were surveyed for their potential as bat roosts. Landmark Practice considered that these had low potential to support roosting bats and recommend a single emergence survey to determine presence / absence and status. This was carried out in August 2018 and no bats were found to emerge, although some activity by common and soprano pipistrelles were observed on the eastern boundary. The Landmark Practice however state that 'While no evidence of roosting bats was noted during the building inspection of emergence survey, bats were noted flying over/around the site application site. As a precaution, and due to the transitory nature of bat roosts, if the demolition works are delayed by more than one year from the date of the bat surveys in August 2018 that have been carried out to inform this assessment, the buildings should be subject to a pre-demolition update emergence survey to confirm the absence of bats. Given that the local planning authority has duty of strict protection of European protected species under the Habitats Regulations I would condition this as follows in order our legal obligations are fulfilled.

- Demolition of buildings may not in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:
 - a) a statement in writing from the licensed bat ecologist to the effect

that she/he does not consider that the development will require a licence; or

b) a copy of the licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the development to go ahead

Reason: In the interests of the strict protection of European protected species and in accordance with policy NH6 of the West Somerset Local Plan

The habitats present, coupled with the small scale of the site and the limited evidence of bird species during survey work indicates that the site is likely to offer some opportunities for common foraging and nesting bird species in an urban context. The following needs to be conditioned:

- No removal of hedgerows, trees or shrubs or demolition of buildings or structures shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation and buildings for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared or buildings demolished and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with policy NH6 of the West Somerset Local Plan

The residential garden of The White House offers some limited opportunities to common reptile species such as slow worm. As such, to ensure that reptiles are not injured or killed during development works, the following staged approach should be implemented during site clearance. This should be conditioned as follows:

- Prior to any vegetation clearance or ground works, any vegetation in the construction area should initially be reduced to a height of 15 centimetres above ground level by hand, brushings and cuttings removed and left for a minimum period of 48 hours of warm suitable weather (limited rain and wind, with temperatures of 10°C or above) before clearing to minimise the risk of harming/killing any reptiles that may be present and to encourage their movement onto adjoining land in the active period. Written notification of the date of the initial cut should be submitted to the local planning authority prior to the work being carried out.

Reason: In the interests of UK protected species and in accordance with policy NH6 of the West Somerset Local Plan

The Elevation drawing of Plot B appears to be damaged and I cannot open it on the web. However, I recommend that the following is conditioned. The National Planning Policy Framework (170d) requires biodiversity enhancement within development.

- The following features will be installed into the structure of Plots A and B:
 - a) A Habitat 001 bat roost or similar will be integrated into the structure below the apex on the west elevation's southern gable

- end at least 4 metres above ground level of Plot A.
- a) Three Schwegler Type 1A swift boxes or similar) will be integrated into the structure at least 5 metres above ground level, at least 1 metre apart and away from windows on the north elevation of Plot A
- b) Two Schwegler 1SP house sparrow terraces will be installed under the eaves of a north facing elevation
- a) A bee brick built into the wall about 1 metre above ground level on the southern elevation of Plots A and B.

Photographs of the installed features will be submitted to the local planning authority prior to completion of construction

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

Bee bricks built into the southern elevations would contribute to the Somerset Pollinator Action Plan. Research shows that bees will live in the bricks and there is no risk associated with their installation as solitary bees do not live in hives or have a queen, and do not sting. The bricks have a solid back with the cavities placed on the outside wall.

Response to revised plans: Comments and recommendations still apply.

Housing Enabling Officer -

The pre-app does not make any reference to affordable housing. However, as the application is based on 13 dwellings it is over the threshold and therefore a requirement for 35% of the dwellings to be affordable. This would equate to 4.5 affordable homes which should be rounded up to 5. Based on the recent Housing Needs figures from Homefinder, there is a high level of demand for both 1 and 2 bed units and therefore the requirement is for a mix of 2 x 1 bed and 3 x 2 bed homes social rented units.

Comments in response to revised plans:

No further comments received [NOTE: revised plans reduce number of dwellings to 7 which is below policy threshold for affordable housing]

Wessex Water Authority -

No objections.

Somerset County Council - flooding & drainage -

This application is now a minor application it falls below the requirements for LLFA statutory consultation. Therefore, we have no comments to make regarding this application, however we would advise the LPA that this application should still be accompanied by a viable surface water drainage strategy.

South West Heritage Trust -

The site lies within the Minehead Area of High Archaeological Potential as identified by the retained Local Plan policy. This area encompasses the Lower Town area of the former medieval town, which formed the market and administrative centre for Minehead in the later medieval and post medieval period. A review of the Somerset

Historic Environmental Record has demonstrated that there are a number of heritage assets lying within or adjacent to the application site which have not been considered as part of this application. The submitted Heritage Impact assessment appears to only address impacts upon the built environment and not archaeological potential. There is currently insufficient information contained within the application on the nature of any archaeological remains to properly assess their significance. For this reason I recommend that the applicant be asked to provide further information on any archaeological remains on the site prior to the determination of the application. This is likely to require initially a desk based assessment and further fieldwork evaluation as indicated in the NPPF paragraph 189.

Development Enabling Specialist (Public Open Space) -

West Somerset Local Plan policy CF1 requires the appropriate provision of formal sports facilities and / or informal public amenity open - space / play space as an integral part of new development. The West Somerset Council Play Provisions Audit (2008) found that there are distinct gaps in the amount of designated play spaces in West Somerset. The audit also highlighted that overall quality of designated play spaces is only considered "fair". It is recommended that as this development will increase local need for play space this development should achieve improvements to the closest play area. The Council recommends the following standard of provision:

Children's space 20 square metres per family dwelling (a dwelling with 2 or more bedrooms) to comprise casual play space LEAPS and NEAPS to the required standard as appropriate. This standard excludes space required for noise buffer zones. For a development of 13 dwellings of which 6 would be 2 bed + off site children's play contribution should be sought and calculated as £3263 per each 2 bed + dwelling. The contribution will be indexed and spent on additional play equipment for the play area closest to the development.

Response to revised plans - no response received

Representations Received

Minehead Conservation Society have written a letter of objection noting that the area is the 'most historically significant part of Minehead' and part of the town's 'heritage tourism offer', that the existing building is 'far less intrusive in height and scale', the proposed design has no relationship with buildings in the surroundings, impacting on the cottages and other buildings and being an 'act of vandalism'

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for the West Somerset planning area comprises the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, retained saved policies of the West Somerset District Local Plan (2006) Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015) and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below.

West Somerset Local Plan to 2032

NH13	Securing high standards of design
EC5	Safeguarding existing employment uses
TR1	Access to and from West Somerset
EC1	Widening and strengthening the local economy
NH2	Management of Heritage Assets

Retained saved policies of the West Somerset Local Plan (2006)

T/8	Residential Car Parking
-----	-------------------------

Determining issues and considerations

The main issues are: the principle of development and change of use; design and materials; amenity; access, sustainable transport and parking; heritage; and biodiversity

Principle of development

This application is for a change of use from a commercial laundry to a mixed use with 7no residential units and mix of A1/A2/A3/B1 uses (shops, professional services, offices, café), entailing demolition of the building. The site is in Market House Lane, Minehead in a very central location and just off the Parade, Minehead's central shopping area. The application has been amended since first submitted, significantly reducing the quantum of proposed development and red line area. Relevant policies for this application include MD1 Minehead development, which notes that proposals must "support and strengthen the settlement's role as the main service and employment centre in West Somerset, particularly in terms of the diversity and quality of its historic and natural environment, services and facilities". The site is in current use as a commercial laundry, which is considered to be likely to be a B1 light industrial use. As the proposed development would entail the loss of B1 employment land with the creation of A1/A2/A3/B1 facilities, policies of relevance include EC1 'Widening and strengthening the local economy' which supports developments which will make the local economy stronger and more diverse and increase the proportion of higher paid jobs, and further notes that new developments, "...redevelopment and, conversion proposals for all types of employment generating activities will be encouraged". It is therefore considered that the proposed creation of new employment space for mix uses including office and

professional services represents a positive diversification of the employment offer in central Minehead, meeting the tests of policy EC1. The application also includes 7 apartments at one-bedroom each. The site is within central Minehead so is considered to be a sustainable location for residential development. The development is proposed with no allocated parking for either commercial or residential uses. This is discussed in detail below in relation to policy TR2 'Reducing reliance on the private car', which is 'designed to minimise additional transport demand arising from new development maximise modal choice', offers some support for this type of 'car-free development as does retained policy T/8 which (at appendix 4) notes that for town centre dwellings the standard of one space per dwelling may be varied if there are public car parks and public transport in the vicinity. Accordingly it is considered that the proposed development does benefit from 'in principle' policy support.

Change of use

The site is proposed for a change of use from a B1 employment land use to the mix of uses as described above. Policy EC5 'Safeguarding existing employment uses' protects employment uses from changes to 'residential or other non-employment generating uses' except where it is demonstrated that the 'activity is no longer appropriate or sustainable in that location'; the site has been marketed for twelve months; any new use would not prejudice adjacent or existing uses; and would not result in undesirable transport patterns over minor roads. It is noted that no marketing of the building for other B1 light industrial employment uses has been undertaken. However the site has very problematic vehicular access on a very narrow, single-lane road (Market House Lane) and would be unsuitable for access by large HGV's. There is also limited direct access for parking on-site for cars or vans. The current users are intending to move to alternative premises on an industrial estate in Minehead where there is far better access for large vehicles. The proposed commercial uses would be unlikely to require the numbers of vehicular movements from large vans/small HGVs as the current use. It is acknowledged that the site, if it continues with the existing light industrial usage, would have significant issues in relation to road widths, parking and access for large vehicles. Additionally the surrounding buildings are primarily in residential use except for the neighbouring advice centre, which is now closed and has consent for conversion to a solely residential use. If implemented this would leave only the Julian's Laundry building as an ongoing commercial (B1) site except for the rear sides of buildings which have accesses on Market House Lane but frontages onto the Parade, (and in most cases have residential apartments above and/or behind commercial frontages, shops, etc on the Parade).

Therefore, the proposed uses fit in well with the national government's general direction of travel in terms of planning policy and the rejuvenation of high streets through the inclusion of residential uses above shops and professional services outlets, as well government policy towards re-use of semi-redundant upper floor areas for residential purposes, which is evident in existing and proposed changes to the General Permitted Development Order. Accordingly it is considered that there are clear planning benefits to the proposed uses in terms of increasing the available number of residential apartments, especially for lower cost (although not technically 'affordable' or 'social' rent) one bedroom units, and providing employment space

suitable for professional services which would increase the availability of higher paid jobs, an aim of policy EC1. The proposed mix of uses is considered to strike a good balance between retaining some appropriate small-scale commercial uses to the lower floors and frontage, and residential uses above and is considered by the local planning authority (LPA) to be acceptable.

Design and materials

The proposed design and footprint of development has been subject to considerable reductions since the application was first submitted and now only includes the area currently occupied by the Julian's Laundry building (plot A), not the dwelling behind the site known as the White House (plot B). The site is at the bottom of a hill and the land is steeply sloping in places, so the design has mixed one, two and three storey joined blocks (respectively to the rear/north, side/east and front/south), arranged around an inner courtyard with an undercroft gateway entrance and apartment block above. The ground floor would feature the retail/office unit, with areas for secure cycle storage and bins, and the internal open courtyard area, and two doorways for pedestrian access located inside the courtyard and on the adjoining lane. The design is contemporary but pays reference to vernacular materials with the use of brick and stone. The main aesthetic is of a contemporary rendition of converted industrial buildings, similar to the Docklands development in east London, or Albert Dock in Liverpool. Although contemporary and a marked change from the building as existing the design keeps elements of the original building in its use of a double-gate wide entrance and a brick front façade. As the area around the site is densely packed the changes are not considered to be harmful to the area and would be in-keeping with the rear entrances to shops and flats (whose ground-level front elevations are along the Parade) which are located opposite to the site.

The building's height at three storey is a notable increase over the existing building at Julian's laundry but is no higher than the Queens Head Inn located very close to the site on the corner of Market House Lane and Holloway Street. The design is considered to be acceptable with a minor amendment to the proposed materials to the eastern side elevation to continue the use of stone, which has been agreed with the agent but has not been amended on drawings so will be set by a condition accordingly. The increase in height is considered to have relatively limited impacts at street level as the road is very narrow and features buildings with some variety in heights but is bounded by the start of the hill to the north. So the height has been designed to diminish with the topography. In terms of views from within Market House Lane to the east and west of the site it is not considered that the proposed blocks would have a dominating or intrusive impact and the current aspect of the street-scene would be largely preserved as building lines and use of materials would be similar.

In regards to the design of the apartments these would be one-bedroom with combined space for living room/kitchens and modest shower-rooms. Internal space standards set out in the (then) DCLG's Nationally Described Space Standards are at 39m² minimum for a 1person one bedroom apartment, unless it features a shower room instead of a bathroom. All the proposed apartments would have shower rooms and vary in size between 38m² up to 52m² which meets nationally designated

internal space requirements.

Therefore subject to details of materials and the noted changes to use of stone on the side lane elevation, the proposed design is considered acceptable.

As the site is within a Conservation Order a condition will be required stipulating that prior to any commencement of demolition evidence of a contract for the building the proposed development is supplied to the LPA to prevent the creation of a gap in the Conservation Area.

Heritage

The LPA have a duty under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990 and section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to consider the impacts of development on the setting of Listed Buildings and designated heritage assets, and to consider archaeological potential at development sites. This is supported by Local Plan policies NH1, NH2 and NH3. The site is within the Wellington Square Conservation Area and is within the setting of listed buildings further east along Market House Lane, comprised of three, early 18th century, terraced cottages in pink painted render over cob (grade II) and the remnants of the old market cross base and shaft, which is of 15th century origin. The proposed replacement building is considered to have a positive impact on the setting of designated heritage assets as the existing building has little architectural merit and is utilitarian in character. The existing front building line would be retained, with a sympathetic palette of materials and with other features that have affinities with the building as extant. Views to the important market cross and adjacent cottages would be unaffected from the Parade entrance to Market House Lane to the south, and there would minimal changes in views from the west travelling from Holloway Street into Market House Lane looking east. It is considered that the setting of these assets would not be harmed by the proposed development and the character of the area would be preserved and enhanced through increased residential use of the area and visitors/customers to the proposed commercial unit.

Access, parking and sustainable transport

The site would be accessed off of Market House Lane which, as cited above, is narrow and unsuitable for large vehicles and has no parking permitted. The proposed development includes 7 apartments with no allocated parking provision. However it is noted that there are public car-parks within a few minutes walk of the site and that the proposal includes a covered and secure space for storage of bicycles. Retained policy T/8 is supplemented by a table contained in appendix 4 of the adopted WSC Local Plan to 2032 setting out standards for residential car parking. The local plan statements contained in appendix 4 specifically refer to variations to the parking standards for 'town centre dwellings', and, given that Minehead is the largest town in the former West Somerset Council area, it is considered that this policy is directly applicable at the proposed development site. Therefore whilst the Highway Authority's note of caution is accepted, it is considered that, 'on balance', the proposed car-free development is acceptable, and would

encourage the use of sustainable transport in a town centre location where there is very quick access to shops and services, and to public transport.

The proposal shows a covered area for storage of bicycles with 14 spaces provided. This would need to be increased to 15 and details will be required to be set by a condition attached to any permission granted. The ground floor plan showing the cycle storage area indicates seven free-standing bars to lock bicycles to. This number could be increased or a bar attached to a wall to allow for an increased number and these details would have to be submitted prior to occupation of the dwellings. The area designated for cycle storage appears to be large enough to store 15 cycles.

The Highway Authority has noted that the applicant 'ideally' should alter the extant Traffic Regulation order 'to remove any confusion regarding parking arrangements in front of the access junction. This would help to guarantee the rights of residents to safely access the site in perpetuity'. An informative to this effect will be included in any permission granted.

Biodiversity

The application documentation included an ecological survey and report. This covered both the current application site and the area occupied by the dwelling called the White House further north of the site. The submitted information has been reviewed by the County Ecologist. Whilst the LPA agrees with the comments from the County Ecologist, the recommended conditions include one for brush clearance to protect potential slow worm habitat. As the proposed development has been significantly revised to remove the element with a domestic garden to the White House, this condition is considered to be unnecessary now as there are no open, undeveloped, ground-level non-roof spaces within the proposed development boundary where plants could grow and which could provide a potential habitat for slow worms. So this condition has not been added.

Other matters

Minehead Town Council have raised concerns regarding the development including access, design and heritage concerns and requested that the planning committee conduct a site visit. It is further understood that the town mayor has requested a site visit by the planning committee. The local Conservation Society has objected to the development, citing concerns about design and impacts on heritage. These matters are discussed above.

In regards to flood risks at the site, it is within flood zone 1 so at low risk. Details of drainage would be set by condition attached to any permission granted.

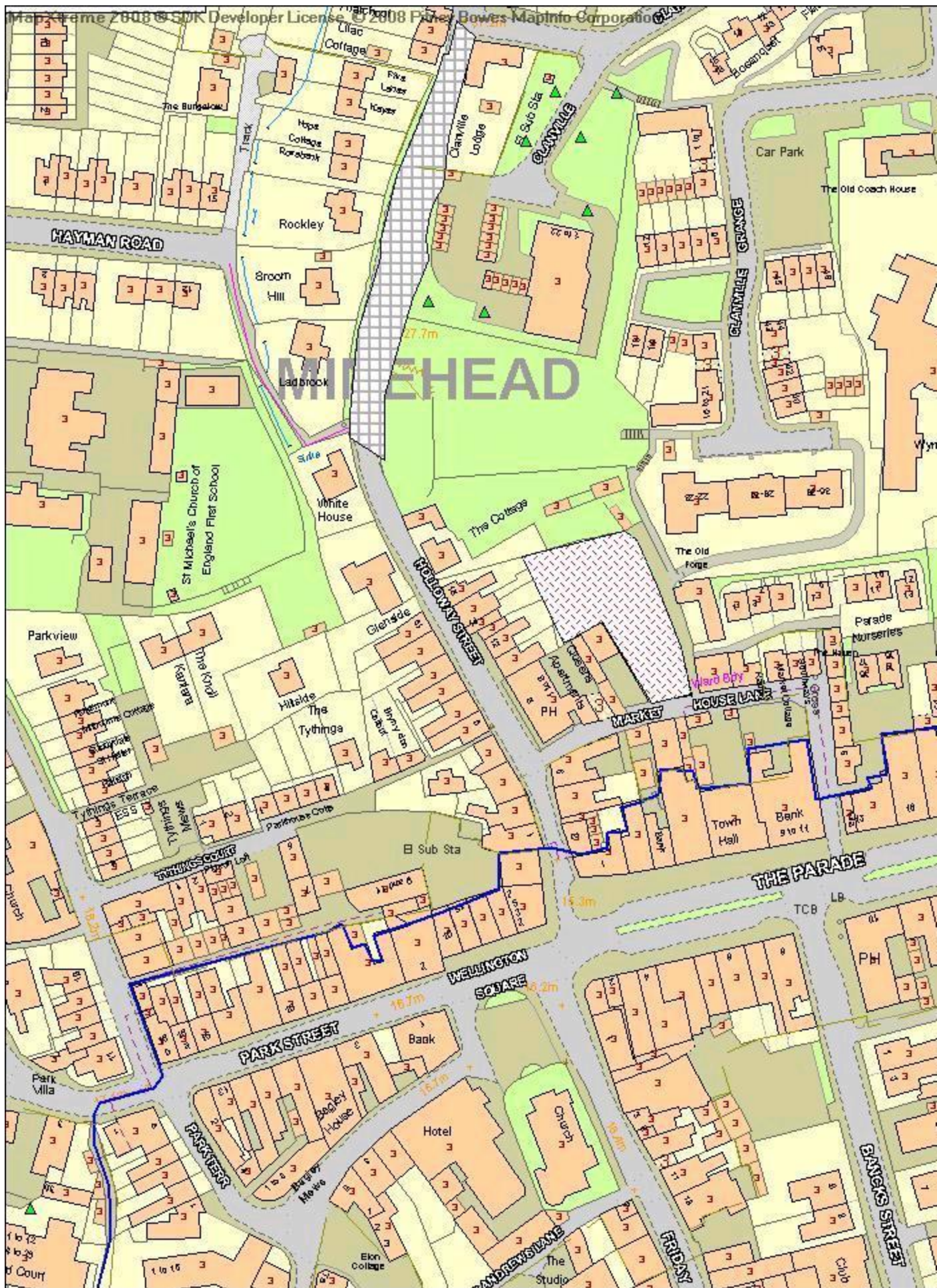
In regards to comments from the two enabling specialists, these ceased to have relevance when the application was amended to reduce the quantum of development to take it below the threshold where affordable housing and contributions for play would be required.

Conclusion

The application is considered to represent a good mix of uses for the site which currently is in a light industrial use in an area which is town centre, with inadequate road access and predominantly residential in character. The heritage characteristics and designations in the area are of central importance to the recommendation in this application and it is considered that the proposed design is contemporary but appropriate for its context. The proposed residential element does not provide for car parking but the location is central with access to public transport and car parks and with included provision for bicycle storage. Therefore the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy requirements and is recommended for conditional approval.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Contact Officer: Alex Lawrey



Application No 3/21/19/034
Demolition of bungalow and
laundry buildings and erection of
13 No. apartments with 164sqm
commercial (Class A1, A2, A3
and B1) space with associated
car and cycle parking, refuse
facilities, infrastructure and
landscaping
Julians Laundry Service, Market
House Lane, Minehead
Planning Manager
West Somerset Council,
West Somerset House
Killick Way
Williton TA4 4QA
West Somerset Council
Licence Number: 100023932

This Map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of
the controller of HMSO © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to
prosecution or civil proceedings.

Easting: 296807
Northing: 146284

Scale: 1:1250

