



Hinckley Town Centre

The Old Post Office Counter

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**Design & Access
Statement**

25-69 PT1- DAS

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Preamble

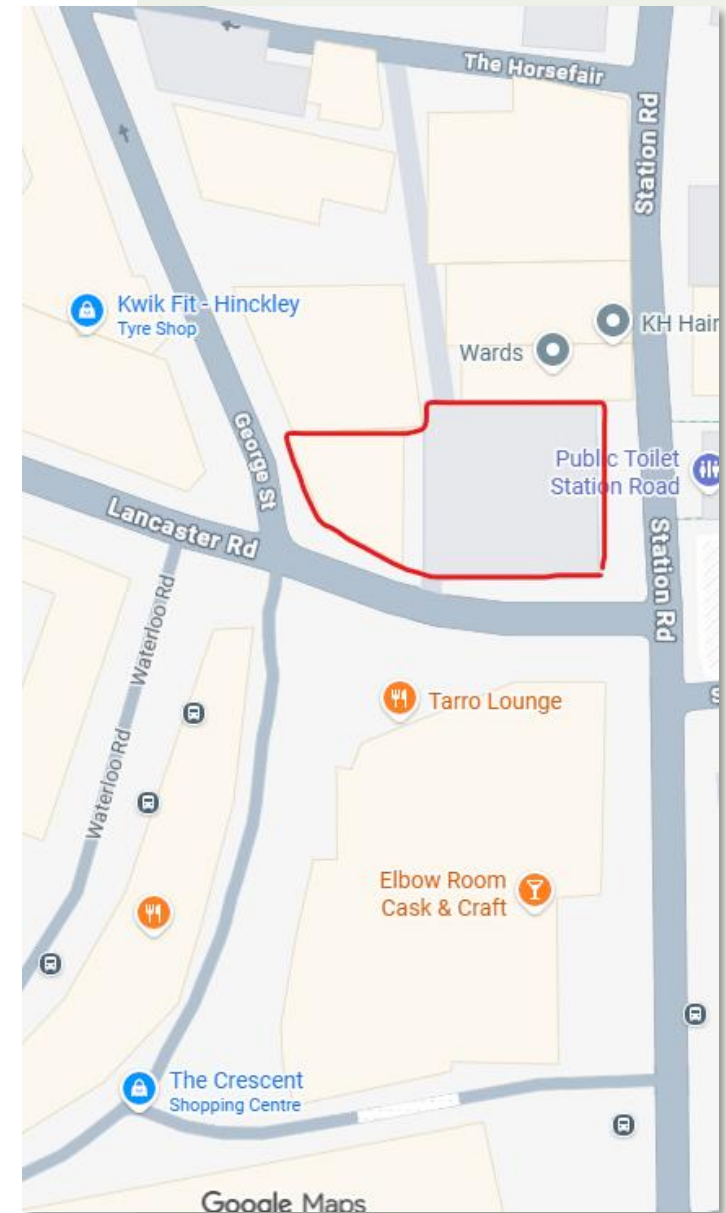
This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Hayward Architects to accompany the submission for Full Planning approval for the replacement of a shop front at 22 Station Road, Hinckley Town Centre.

This statement is additional material which describes how the proposed development responds to its setting, as is relevant to the planning process as described in the *National Design Guide* and is to be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

Please note that the applicant has appointed qualified and experienced architects to undertake the design of this development.

If the planning service should feel that the proposal is not compliant with national or local planning policies, please provide details of the specific policy and explain how this policy is being breached.

This will enable the design team to co-ordinate a full and appropriate response which accommodates all of the factors which inform good design, alongside those which are pertinent to the planning system.



Project Description

This application relates to the first part of a wider development, which seeks to bring a cluster of historic buildings in Hinckley town centre back into everyday use and consequently secure their long-term future and maintenance.

The site is naturally divided into 4 distinct parts with different historic uses and very different architectural styles. These are to be developed under 4 separate planning applications and with a phased approach, (the order of which is yet to be ascertained)

This application is for Part 1 – The old Post Office Counter

The former post office building (Parts 1+2) was constructed in Hinckley town centre in 1902 and designed by the Architect for Provincial Post Office: William Thomas Oldrieve.

A sorting office was added to the side in the mid twentieth century (Part 3) and a further ancillary building at an unknown date (part 4). The post office counter ceased trading in 2015 with the sorting office continuing until 2023. The buildings have been vacant ever since. The entire site has been purchased in full by the applicant (Investment Street Ltd)

Part 1



Part 2



Part 3



Part 4



Part 1

Part one of the development is the element of the old post office at 22 station road which was most recently used as the post office counter. It is to be offered for private rent as a self-contained retail unit.

This interior is to be updated to current standards of utility and decor. It will remain in Use Class E

We can see from historic photos that this part of the building was originally of brick and stone. The date of the insertion of the existing shopfront is unknown.

The resulting aperture does not look out of place nor require any works to either repair or upgrade the masonry.

The shopfront is to be timber panelled with large glazing and a recessed, central door. Its design will be true to a traditional Edwardian aesthetic so as to site well in its setting.



Proposal

Context

Please see the Heritage Statement for a detailed description of the context and a photographic record of the surrounding buildings.

Station Road was for the most part developed at the turn of the twentieth century and displays a distinctly Edwardian character.

The Old Post Office is the end part of a terrace which spans a good length of the northernmost part of the street and contributes strongly to its character.

Unfortunately, over the years, as new shopfronts have been inserted they have not always been true to the Edwardian aesthetic and have resulted in a mish mash of utilitarian facades at ground floor level. When taken in context of the whole street scene, the conservation area is heavily let down by these modern shopfronts.

It could easily be argued that the Old Post office is the worst offender.



Looking at first floor and above, although mostly intact, many of the buildings are in a poor state of repair and effectively vacant.

The creation of new shopfronts which are appropriate to the historic setting, are of high quality and hand crafted in traditional materials would lift the general impression of this street to the level it deserves.

This application can only effect one of the shopfronts, but it is hoped that it will inspire better responses from the neighbouring units when their turn for regeneration comes.



A selection of existing shopfronts on Station Road, north of the proposed



Identity

The identity of the street is distinctively Edwardian. The proposed shopfront is also to display Edwardian characteristics:

As a progression from Victorian style, Edwardian architecture and design sought to be more elegant and restrained. Excessive decoration was toned down to something more akin to Art Nouveau (which was a contemporary)

Classical elements were incorporated such as pilasters and cornices. Most shopfronts were wooden with a return to the joy of craftsmanship. The signage will be hand painted and lit by surface mounted units.

The availability of plate glass meant that windows could become taller and lighter, with no need for glazing bars. This results in lower stall risers.

Doors tended to be further inset and symmetry was preferred

All of these features are incorporated into the proposed shopfront to make sure it is authentically Edwardian in its historical references as opposed to Victorian or Georgian.



Built Form

This proposal does not seek to affect the built form of the street in a material way, it does however bring back the usefulness of a building which sits in a prominent space within the overall built form of Hinckley Town centre.

As a result, this proposal offers a tangible benefit to Built Form

Movement

This proposal does not offer any new or changed movement networks, it does however sit on an already active pedestrian route between the historic retail area of Castle Street and the newer shopping centre at The Crescent.

To enhance this building is to enhance the experience of walking around Hinckley town centre

Nature

This proposal does not have the opportunity to have either a positive or negative effect on nature

Public Spaces

This proposal does not offer any new or changed public spaces.

It does however sit immediately adjacent to a well used public thoroughfare, abutting the back of pavement.

Realistically, security needs to be a consideration for retail premises in all town and city centres.

To ensure the integrity of the conservation area is protected, this retail unit will not use a roller shutter. If the tenant wishes to use protection it must be in the form of manually fitted grilles.

Uses

This application does not seek to change the use of the existing building.

Homes and Buildings

N/A

Resources

N/A

Lifespan

The Shopfront will be constructed of timber and painted, which will last for many years.

The manner in which the shopfront sits perfectly in its Edwardian setting will make sure it is desirable for any future tenants.

This proposal is the opportunity to bring this building back to life and prevent dereliction.

High streets around the country are struggling to survive, against very real challenges and it is doubly important that opportunities to rescue and restore historic retail units are embraced.

Access

The access point is to be moved to the centre of the shop front. This is to create an Edwardian symmetry and versatile interior.

The door will be set back which allows for the necessary ramping to provide Part M compliant Level access for disabled users.

The toilet inside will be unisex and fully Part M compliant

Summary

- This proposal is to replace the dilapidated shopfront to the old Post Office Counter at number 22 Station Road, Hinckley
- It is the first part of a broader application incorporating the entirety of the old post office site
- It is not listed but does sit within the Hinckley Town Centre conservation area
- The proposed new shopfront is to be constructed of timber panelling with beaded pilasters and a hand painted sign.
- The timber and glass door will be recessed and a wrought iron hanging sign will complete the Edwardian aesthetic.
- Roller shutters will not be permitted and traditional lighting must be employed.
- The replacement of this unsightly shopfront with a traditional example will serve to uplift the street scene and improve the conservation area as a whole.



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