

Design and Access Statement

18 Tarrant Street [locally known as Sparks Yard] is an iconic building within the Tarrant Street Streetscape. It is the largest, most visually prominent building in this part of Arundel. It is a valuable and well known element of this part of the town. It has a history, as described in the heritage statement submitted as part of this application. We, as Applicant/ Agent have owned and occupied this building in one guise or another for just in excess of 30 years. As agent for the application, we operated our architectural practice from it for many years and therefore have both a great deal of detailed knowledge of and empathy with it. We therefore approach the proposals shown in this application in the spirit of helping an 'old friend' to the next stage in its life, a new sustainable existence for the coming years. A new existence that, given both the building's inherent adaptability and resilience, ensures that its elements and character are retained for future generations to come.

The proposals within this application seek to retain as much of the character and detail of the listed building as possible. During all of its changes of use over the years, largely as a result of the high flexibility of the building's 'open floor' warehouse format, very little variation to the building's structure and fabric have been required. It has retained the original utilitarian character both externally and internally. The proposals within this application adopt a similar approach.

The building's overall form is not proposed to change only the uses within. A three storey retail unit, in this location, is no longer commercially viable. Retaining a commercial use on the ground floor at Tarrant Street Level, orientated to the very public Tarrant Street, despite the current challenges of 'the UK high Street', we believe, still is. In order to achieve this, this application seeks to broaden the spectrum of possible uses to include professional and office uses as well as the existing retail use. The upper two floors, always more orientated to the elevated level of the more private Sparks Yard are no longer viable as retail or restaurant space. Therefore our intention, causing as little 'pain' as possible to the existing building fabric, is twofold: firstly to rationalise and re-present the ground floor as a high quality, stand alone commercial unit and secondly to turn the upper two floors, focused upon Sparks Yard, into one of the most exciting houses in Arundel.

The Commercial Unit

This proposal seeks to reconfigure the plan layout of the Tarrant Street level ground floor, in order to remove ancillary areas associated with the existing use and provide a new, more appropriately scaled separate access to the unit from Tarrant Street. The current access is dimensionally squeezed and dominated by access to the lift serving the upper floors of the building. The current configuration being the result of the layout implemented when the ground floor was used as a restaurant [wine bar] in the 1990s.

The proposed new access utilises the original service access from Tarrant Street in the western section of the building's footprint. The two large timber access doors having been sealed closed for in excess of 20 years. It is proposed to re-open them to provide a wide access to a new large entrance loggia. This loggia forming a large covered refuge area [of a similar scale to the one existent in the south western corner of the building], in order to

similarly facilitate safe ambulant and disabled access and egress to and from the building from Tarrant Street. These doors are to remain fully open when the commercial unit is, at any time, occupied. Access to the unit from the loggia is proposed as being a fully glazed double swing door, set in a fully glazed small sectioned steel framed entrance screen.

The unit itself is proposed as cleared of all existing retail fittings and the false bulkhead originally forming the bar, when it was used as a wine bar. It is also proposed to remove all internal non load bearing walls currently forming the staff galley area, telecoms room and male w.c., in order to incorporate the whole upper mezzanine level as a part of the unit's usable floor plate. The existing male w.c. is retained as a staff w.c. and the existing store room is also retained. The existing stairway link to the second storey of the building is not retained. The unit is considered as 'stand alone' from the remainder of the building with only a convenience personnel door to the residential unit lift lobby, linking the two.

The House [two storey apartment]

Consideration was given to proposing the conversion of the two upper floors of the building into two, three or even four separate apartments, but given the opportunity to create an exciting larger scale house with its own private garden, whilst being aware that any over subdivision of the building would detract from its 'open characteristics' as an originally designed warehouse, we propose a single residential unit - a substantial house.

The main access to the house is proposed from the now private elevated garden [Sparks Yard], whilst the existing lift accessible from Tarrant Street level to each of the two levels of the house, provides both ambulant and disabled access direct from street level. The house at Tarrant Street level, retaining the existing lift lobby, the lift itself and the existing lift motor room. The latter reconfigured with a proposed new external access door. The service meters for the house would also be accommodated within the Commercial units access lobby, close to the building's existing intakes.

The proposal is for an 'upside down house' with the main living space occupying the upper floor. This solution both providing the best external long range external views to the main living area and keeping the most spectacular un-subdivided space within the building, intact. It is proposed that all existing timber roof trusses remain exposed. The existing enclosed stairwell is proposed to be opened up, with a section of existing floor plate, adjacent to it and an existing tank room above it, removed to form a two storey atrium the space from what is currently an enclosed lobby with a loggia below at first floor level. This two storey high, garden linked, entrance loggia is proposed as being as the new internal focus of the 'house'. It is also proposed to add 2no conservation roof lights, visually concealed in the central 'roof valley' of the building, directly above the loggia in order to bring sunlight into this major space within the house.

A spectacular space in which to live. The second storey [house ground floor] of the building would be subdivided to form 4 double bedrooms, one of which would also serve as a study. Each of the bedrooms accessed from a colonnaded hall, one side of which would be fully open to the adjacent double storey height loggia. The existing steel and timber stairway in the loggia would be retained and refurbished as a contribution, together with the lift, to the building's 20th century heritage.

The 18a and 18b Tarrant Street issue.

The relationship between 18 Tarrant Street and its two neighbours to the north and east has always been intimate. 18a was built, it is assumed by Mr Sparks not much later than

number 18. Assuming that its name suggests as a piano store. Access must have been a difficulty from the elevated Sparks Yard area, unless it was originally accessible from the now extinct service roadway which allegedly ran, at the level of Sparks Yard, parallel to Maltravers and Tarrant Streets, accessed at both ends from Bakers Arms and King's Arms Hills. By 1989 access to 18b had degenerated to a narrow fenced path around the northern perimeter of what is now Sparks Yard. The subsequent creation of the yard as now existent by redrawing the boundary between of 18 and 18a created a new right of way access for 18a through the yard. This worked well throughout the intervening period, initially when 18a was in commercial use [as a B1a office] and latterly when the applicant, the operator of the retail unit within 18 converted 18a into a residential unit for their own occupation.

In another historical anomaly, 18b Tarrant Street, a very small terraced building immediately adjacent to and physically joined to no.18, utilised Sparks yard as a right of way access to its upper floor and also utilised another right of way as an external stairway between its two floors.

In order to regularise this situation 18b has recently been purchased by the owners of 18a [part of the applicant -directors of the applicant company] with the intention to connect 18a and 18b to form a stand alone property, directly accessible from Tarrant Street. Both properties relinquishing their rights of way through what is now defined as the property cartilage of no.18. A revised boundary has now been created between number 18 and the now joint property of 18a/18b and included within this application are modifications to the position of the existing dividing boundary wall between them.

A related application, being made concurrently, by the owners of 18a/18b Tarrant Street [application PP-07849223] to improve the linkage between the now two elements of their property. The application proposes to modifying the existing stairway connection to form a much improved entrance to their property from Tarrant Street. In order to achieve privacy between 18 and 18a/18b, this application includes the closing of 3no. window openings and 1no. personnel doorway in the visually concealed lower part of the building's west elevation in order to properly accommodate these works. We propose that the closure of these windows and door, the effects of which have been incorporated into the proposed internal layout of the building, is essential to create a viable permanent solution to what has been a historically difficult issue.

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