

Planning, Design & Access Statement

Proposal: Alterations to the front façade, replacement of windows, installation of an additional door to provide separate access to the commercial and residential units, and removal of internal walls within the shop area to create an open-plan commercial space.

**1A–1B Wellington Street,
Gravesend,
DA12 1JA**

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1. Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for alterations at 1A–1B Wellington Street, Gravesend. The application proposes:

- Updating the **front façade**;
- Replacing existing windows with heritage-appropriate, energy-efficient alternatives;
- Installing an additional entrance door to provide independent access to the residential accommodation;
- Removing **internal walls within the shop area** to create a flexible open-plan commercial layout.

The property is located within a **Conservation Area**, and the scheme has been carefully designed to preserve and enhance its special character, while ensuring the premises remain fit for modern use.

2. Site and Surroundings

The site is located within Gravesend Town Centre on Wellington Street, an area characterised by mixed-use development with commercial and retail uses at ground floor level and residential accommodation both at ground and upper floors.

The existing frontage of the property is in a poor condition and does not contribute positively to the streetscape. The shop interior is currently subdivided by walls, restricting functionality and flexibility for commercial tenants. The shared access arrangement between the ground floor unit and the residential accommodation is also outdated and inconvenient.

3. The Proposal

The application seeks consent for the following works:

- **Façade Improvements:** Refurbishment and modest upgrading of the frontage to restore the property's visual contribution to the street.
- **Windows:** Replacement of existing units with high-quality timber or timber-effect windows in traditional style, respecting historic proportions.
- **Additional Entrance Door:** Installation of a new front door to provide independent access to the residential accommodation, improving security and legibility.
- **Internal Alterations (Shop Area Only):** Removal of internal walls within the commercial unit to create a more flexible, open-plan layout. The residential areas, including the ground-floor living and kitchen space, will remain untouched.

4. Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been assessed against national and local planning policy, including:

- **National Planning Policy Framework (2023):**
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places;

- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- **Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014):**
 - **CS14 – Housing Type and Size;**
 - **CS19 – Development and Design Principles;**
 - **CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment.**

The scheme accords with these policies by improving design quality, enhancing the Conservation Area, and supporting the vitality of the town centre.

5. Design & Access Statement

Use

The property is in mixed-use, comprising a commercial unit and residential accommodation. Part of the residential unit (kitchen and living space) is located at ground floor, with further accommodation at upper levels. This residential space is unaffected by the proposals. The works relate only to the commercial part of the building.

Amount

No increase in floor area, height, or building footprint is proposed. The works are limited to refurbishment, replacement of windows, installation of a new entrance, and internal reconfiguration within the shop.

Layout

The external layout remains unchanged. Internally, the shop unit will become open-plan through the removal of internal walls, providing greater flexibility and functionality. The residential accommodation, including the ground-floor living and kitchen space, remains untouched.

Scale

The proposal involves minor alterations only, with no change to the building's overall scale, massing, or height.

Appearance

The replacement windows and new door will be of a traditional style, proportion, and material sympathetic to the Conservation Area. The façade refurbishment will improve the building's appearance and ensure it contributes positively to the streetscape.

Access

The proposal introduces an independent front entrance for the residential accommodation, improving access, safety, and security. The commercial unit retains a clear, active frontage. Accessibility to both uses is enhanced through this arrangement.

6. Conservation Area Justification

The site lies within a Conservation Area, where the statutory duty under **Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires that development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

This proposal achieves that by:

- Replacing windows with high-quality heritage-style units;
- Introducing a separate residential entrance consistent with mixed-use historic townscape patterns;
- Refurbishing the façade in a sympathetic and proportionate manner;
- Restricting internal works to the commercial unit only, with no external impact or effect on the area's heritage value.

By modernising the shop layout and enhancing the building's frontage, the scheme supports the continued viability and vibrancy of the town centre, thereby reinforcing the Conservation Area's significance.

7. Conclusion

The proposed alterations at 1A–1B Wellington Street are modest but beneficial interventions which will:

- Enhance the appearance and contribution of the building to the Conservation Area;
- Provide safe and independent access for both commercial and residential uses;
- Modernise the shop unit by removing internal walls to deliver an open-plan layout, while leaving the residential space, including the ground-floor living and kitchen, untouched;
- Improve sustainability through energy-efficient, heritage-appropriate window replacements; and
- Accord with the NPPF and Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (Policies CS14, CS19, CS20).

The works preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in line with the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.