

Ferngrove House, Planning / Design & Access Statement

Location of Proposed Development

Ferngrove House, 1 Ferngrove, Bury, BL9 7LS.

Description of Proposed Development

Proposed 3-storey extension to the side of the existing 3-storey HMO property, to provide an additional 6 HMO bedrooms and habitable spaces, taking the overall no. HMO bedrooms from 7 to 13.

Date

18th December 2023

Applicant

Mr Stephen Owen of Woodtop Estates Ltd.

Agent

Mr Benjamin Pond

1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement is submitted in support of a planning application which seeks to construct a 3-storey side extension to the existing 3-story HMO at Ferngrove House, 1 Ferngrove, Bury, BL9 7LS.

The following document will cover a more detailed description of the proposal, information on the site's history / characteristics and the pre-application advice and how this has been implemented into the scheme.

Site History

Ferngrove House has been on the site since the late 1800s and was previously situated adjacent to Ferngrove Cotton Mill, which no longer exists since demolition in 2000. Up until July 2019, Ferngrove House had been in residential use (Class C3).

However, the property was converted into an HMO for five persons in use Class C4, under permitted development rights, following receipt of the HMO licence in August 2019. The conversion is to a very high standard and the applicant, Mr and Mrs Owen, trading as Woodtop Estates Ltd, has targeted professional tenants, particularly in the healthcare sector, taking advantage of the proximity to Fairfield Hospital.

2. Existing Site Characteristics and Local Area

Public Transport

The application site, which is accessed off Ferngrove, is in very close proximity with Rochdale Old Road (B6222), which links Rochdale with Bury Town Centre. Rochdale Old Road is a busy road that provides bus services into Bury and Rochdale, with the Woodgate Hill and M66 bus stops both being within 100m of the application site. The M66 bus stop provides for five services to Bury Town Centre, these being the 467 trax, 468 trax and B4, which run every two hours, together with the once-a-day services 967 and 968. These same service numbers operate from the Woodgate Hill Road bus stop, but this time running in the direction of Rochdale and Heywood.

Shops & Services

The application site is also very well-sited in relation to nearby shops and services, including the following which are within 400m of the application site: Huntley Brook Post Office, the Coffee & Cream sandwich shop, Aldi, the Premier Express convenience store (which is opposite the M66 bus stop), Lei Tracey Hair Design, Aladdins DIY store, Bullen Automotive and G.A. & M. Holland newsagent. Moreover, Bury Town Centre, with all of its retail, markets and leisure services, and its substantial employment offer, is within a five-minute drive of the application site.

Transport

The pre-application discussions have confirmed that the provision for on-site parking is to be considered further (Discussed further in section 5). In addition to this, there is also provision for a motorcycle space. Of particular importance is the provision of a secure cycle parking area, within the rear amenity space, which will be protected by a secure timber panel fence. Our overall conclusion therefore is that the application site is in a location that is accessible by all forms of transport, including walking.

Refuse Collection

The proposal has been located in its new position to assist the Council's normal waste collection service. The proposal will comply with the Council's green, brown and blue recycling system and its grey rubbish bins.

3. Previous Applications to the Site

Application Number: 63551

Proposal: Roof extension and external alterations at rear

Location: 1 Ferngrove House, Rochdale Old Road, Bury, BL9 7LS

Date of Registration: 07/01/2019

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Application Number: 65482

Proposal: Change of use from house in multiple occupation (HMO) for five persons (Class C4) to HMO for seven persons (Sui Generis), loft conversion with rear dormer and alterations to external elevations

Date of Registration: 07/05/2020

Location: Ferngrove House, 1 Ferngrove, Rochdale Old Road, Bury, BL9 7LS

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Please refer to drawing 016-002 for details of the existing property, and drawing 016-102 for full proposals of the scheme – this includes Site Plan, GA Plans and Elevations.

The proposal seeks to provide a 3-storey side extension in place of the disused garage. The basis of the scheme proposes an additional 6 No. Proposed Bedrooms that range in size from 10.5sqm and 11sqm. On the top floor there is a larger flat proposed which is 40.1sqm in total, including the Lounge / Kitchen and en-suite. All bedrooms meet the minimum requirements in size of 6.5sqm, for 1 person over 10 years old, and also the size of 10.2sqm for 2 people cohabiting.

Each of the bedrooms are designed with an en-suite bathroom at 3.9sqm. Each en-suite is provided with a shower, WC and Wash hand basin.

On the ground floor there is a combined Kitchen / Living and Dining room at 17.8sqm which meets the necessary size requirements of 11.6sqm for 5 No. people in the property (when bedrooms are less than 10.2sqm). Within this room there is sufficient space for a sink/dishwasher, hob/oven and worktop space for food preparation and storage. An opening is to be formed to connect the existing and proposed buildings and separated by 30min Fire Door. Within the hallway at ground floor level a store room is provided under the stairs, this could also be re-purposed as an additional communal WC if required.

The scheme has been designed with the Approved Document B in mind and drawings will be developed further during the Building Control Approval process to demonstrate where; smoke / heat detectors, Fire doors, emergency lighting and escape routes are proposed.

Currently, car parking is unmarked at the site due to only a small number of tenants owning vehicles. However, there is currently sufficient room for 5 No. vehicles to be parked at any one time. As part of the proposal this has now been increased to 9 No. parking space in total – including an EV Charging facility. As part of the parking strategy, it is proposed that the scheme will maintain and increase its provision for secure cycle and motorbike parking.

Given that the position of the proposed extension has disrupted the refuse collection area. This has now been increased in size to 13.2m² and given a dedicated position to the rear of the property, this area will be fitted with artificial lighting and provide ease of access for collection. The existing rear garden / amenity space will be protected and retain its seclusion from the nearby road / motorway.

5. Pre-Application Advice and Actions

Please see below the particular pre-application points and how they have been implemented into the proposals;

Response: *“The site at the front is exposed and highly visible in the street scene. It is considered that the proposed building would assimilate poorly with the existing. The floors and therefore fenestration detailing would jar with the existing principal elevation and windows would appear squat. The roof would be at a shallower gradient and the eaves level would be higher. At the rear, the assimilation would not be as problematic given its lack of visibility and existing rear elevation to which it would be attached.”*

Action: The above statement was noted and implemented within the scheme. The existing building has been used as the basis for the setting out of the space planning to ensure that a visual clarity and cohesion is achieved with the existing principal elevation. The proposed window setting out will match the existing in size and appearance, to further ensure a coordinated finish to the scheme.

By ensuring that the proposed extension aligns with the existing, an opening will be created at ground floor level. This in turn will ensure that the roof eaves and ridge levels are equal to maintain the existing pitch.

Additionally, to ensure the proposal is not too overpowering onto the street, the side elevation has been set back at least 2m from the boundary – this also allows for side access to the extension and maintains the original entrance as the main access to the building whilst not disrupting or negatively affecting the street scene.

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Response: *Looking at the plans I am concerned about the layout and the fact that there are inner rooms particularly to the first and second floors. The escape route is from the bedroom area through the living room. In the event of fire the escape route should not be from a lower to a higher risk room. The rooms either need a lobby/corridor providing or all of the rooms need to be open plan with no separation between the living room and bedroom. The bedrooms are to be a minimum size of 6.5m² for one person.*

Action: The internal space planning has now been redesigned to ensure that all bedrooms are of a minimal size (6.5m^2 for 1 person and 10.2m^2 for 2), there is no escape exit through an inner room and protected corridors have been implemented into the scheme.

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Response: *The bedroom and living room windows would appear to be of a suitable size to provide sufficient natural light and ventilation but if they are to be used as escape windows in the event of a fire they would need to have a minimum openable area of 0.33m^2 which usually equates to 0.45m high by 0.45m wide. The layout to the ground floor and first floor would be acceptable if the windows were of this design. But the second floor and ideally all of the room layout needs to be reconfigured so that it is safe.*

Action: The internal layout has been re-configured and the windows now have a minimal opening area of 0.33m^2 .

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Response: *Based on the environmental setting and the proposed development, it is recommended that a desk study/preliminary risk assessment is carried out as a minimum at application stage. It is also considered likely that an intrusive investigation would be required, however, this can be submitted after a decision has been made on any application for residential development.*

Action: A Phase 1 Preliminary Risk assessment has been carried out and has been submitted with this application. It is requested that any intrusive or further survey works that may be required are considered following a decision as suggested within the pre-application advice.

Although, it has been noted in the survey that the recommendations for the contaminated are a watching brief during any groundwork's activity. Please note that the report is submitted alongside this application in 4 sections due to file size.

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Response: *Bury is therefore required to address these exceedances and to reduce NO_2 concentrations across the borough. Due to this requirement and in line with the principles of Good Practice set out in the EPUK Guidance, as the proposed development includes car parking spaces, this Section will recommend that a condition be attached to any permission that requires the installation of one electric vehicle (EV) charging point (minimum 7kW^*) per unit (dwelling with dedicated parking) or a minimum 20% EV charge points (minimum 7kW^*) (for unallocated parking).*

Action: Please refer to the proposed site plan – the parking bay that is adjacent to the proposed extension (front elevation) will be a designated EV Charging Bay (minimum 7kW).

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Response: *Car Parking arrangement seems rather tight and any application would need to demonstrate that turning could be facilitated. It would be appropriate to provide technical swept path drawings given the limitations of the site. Furthermore, an additional 2 spaces to serve an extra 6 bedrooms would equate to under provision (the existing site provides 7 spaces for 7 bedrooms).*

Action: As highlighted in the pre-application response, it was noted that parking would be 'tight' in its previous layout. Therefore, the proposals have been amended and coordinated to ensure that a suitable number of car and other transport parking facilities have been provided.

As mentioned above the existing property is currently configured as a 7 person HMO and parking numbers allow for 5 No. unallocated spaces (7No. Inc overspill). It is believed that the implied impact on parking by adding an additional 6 No. tenants would be manageable given the current characteristics of the property and its immediate environment.

The client understands the need for additional parking given the growth in tenants and has increased the total of car parking space to 9No. which approx. 70% of 13 tenants. As requested in the pre-app advice a technical swept path analysis has been undertaken to the furthest parking bay, and shows that cars can safely manoeuvre in and out of the space.

This HMO property benefits from having a parking capacity and facility that is somewhat difficult to find amongst many HMO residencies. Typically, HMO properties offer little on-site parking and occupants of HMO accommodation have low car ownership rates; this is evidenced by the current tenants at Ferngrove House which have a walking commute locally to Fairfield Hospital. The requirement for additional car parking could be further depreciated by the property's close proximity to a variety of shops, supermarkets, restaurants and other local amenities, all within walking distance and/or 2km or less. Please refer above to *section 2* for further information of travel options in the local area.

It is believed that the justification for the car parking allocation proposed is sufficient for the number of tenants at any one time. Given that in addition to the car parking spaces provided, secure cycle parking and a designated, marked area for motorcycle parking have been proposed. If in any scenario where additional parking would be required, then given the in-frequent use of Ferngrove Road and low traffic / footfall, there would be sufficient room for 'off-street' parking on this road - this could be confirmed by further investigations if required.

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Response: *The proposed layout does not indicate where (increased) refuse storage provision would be provided (given that the extension is likely to impact on the present area).*

Action: The proposed refuse area is now located in dedicated space to the rear of the property and has been increased to 13.5m².

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Response: *The only potential ecological issues would be bats and nesting birds. The previously supplied assessment would no longer be regarded as valid. I therefore recommend an updated bat and bird assessment is provided as part of any application.*

Action: Bat and Bird Survey has been undertaken and is submitted with the application. The survey recommends that further survey works may be required to establish how / if the building is being roosted by bats prior to any construction, so that suitable procedures can be undertaken accordingly.

6. Conclusion

The proposed development provides an effective use of a currently disused part of the site. The scheme represents sustainable development that will contribute to economic, social and environmental objectives / growth in the local area.

It is believed that the benefits which when assessed against the policies in the local framework and development plans, greatly outweigh any impacts that may be considered. The scheme will provide, increase and improve the availability of housing in the local area, and has been developed in line with the relevant policies relating to HMOs in the UDP.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing your response.