

Design & Access and Supporting Planning Statement – 157 Bolton Road, Bury BL9 2NW

Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is located at no. 157 Bolton Road in Bury and contains an existing two storey end of terrace property plus a basement / lower ground floor (overall 3 floors). The building is currently vacant and has been for a number of years due to lack of market interest. The previous owner confirmed that the property was last used as a family-run accountancy business (use class E) but it was already vacant when the previous owner purchased the property in June 2022. Despite various marketing exercises, the property has been vacant for over 3 years.

The site contains a small rear garden which is covered by hardstanding and backs onto Back Bolton Road South.

The site is located within a designated Local Shopping Centre along Bolton Road, which is a busy artery road (A58) into Bury Town Centre characterised by a mix of residential and business / commercial uses. The site offers a sustainable location from both public transport and local amenities perspectives; in close proximity to Bury Town Centre (20 minutes walking distance) as well as Bury Tram and Bus Interchange (within 20 minutes walking distance). There are also a number of bus stops located within close proximity to the property.



Figure 1 The application site

Planning History

By way of background, a previous planning application (LPA ref. 71992) for the “*Change of use from commercial use (Class E) to 5 bed, 6 occupants house in multiple*

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occupation (HMO) (Class C4) and associated external alterations (including new doors and windows and removal of advertisement hoarding)” was refused by Bury Council on 28 July 2025.

The Decision Notice included 8 reasons for refusal.

This current planning application seeks to address the reasons for refusal and includes a number of amendments to the proposed internal layout as well as additional supporting assessments. An assessment against the previous reasons for refusal is discussed further in the planning assessment section below.

Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing vacant business unit (use class E) to a 5-bedroom, 6-occupants HMO (use class C4) and associated external works including the removal of roller shutter and advertisement hoarding along the front elevation, new windows and doors, and new access gate to the rear boundary.

The proposals seek to internally refurbish the property to high quality standards to create 5 bedrooms (4x single occupancy and 1x double occupancy room) with designated en-suites and a generous communal kitchen/ dining area.

The proposals will also include a new secure and covered cycle parking facility (with capacity for 6 bikes) in the basement which can be accessed directly from the back garden via the rear access gate, and a bin storage area to accommodate the required capacity of waste storage (general and recycling).

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

Loss of Employment Use

The site is located within the urban area close to the town centre and in an area of mixed commercial and residential uses. The NPPF advocates the principles of sustainable development and encourages a mix of uses within the urban area in order to bring back into use vacant buildings.

The application site is located in a designated Local Shopping Centre (UDP Policy S1/4 - LC05 - Bolton Road / Bury Bridge).

UDP Policy S1/4 Local Shopping Centres states that *“the Council will seek to maintain and enhance local shopping centres and will encourage the provision of a range of shopping facilities required to serve purely local needs.”*

Policy EC2/2: 'Employment Land and Premises Outside the Employment Generating Areas' and its accompanying Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)14:

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'Employment Land and Premises' seeks to protect existing employment land and premises unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the land and premises are no longer suited to continued employment use from a land use perspective, including consideration to the viability of the existing employment site.

Paragraph 3.10 of the SPD states that “*One of the key indicators of viability is whether or not there is a proven market demand for the site*” and “*where it is proposed to redevelop an existing site that is considered suitable, in land use terms, for continued employment use, applicants will be expected to clearly demonstrate that the site has been actively and robustly marketed at a realistic price that reflects the employment use.*”

The property has been vacant since June 2022 and is located within a block of 7 properties that are in either residential use (2 properties) or commercial use (3 properties) or vacant (2 properties). The properties are generally in a run-down state in need of refurbishment and modernisation on the edge of the local shopping centre, which could be a contributing factor to the lack of market interest. The property was marketed between May 2024 and June 2025 but received no interest for either a business /commercial use or a mixed-use development.

The Council's reasons for refusal (item 1) states that: “*The application contains insufficient detail to demonstrate there is no reasonable prospect of the site being retained or re-developed for either an office or other employment uses, contrary to the requirements of Policy EC2/2 - 'Employment Land and Premises Outside the Employment Generating Areas' of the Bury Unitary Development Plan, SPD 14: 'Employment Land and Premises' and the National Planning Policy Framework*”

The application is supported by a statement of evidence from the local estate agent (included at **Appendix 1**) which confirms the property was marketed from May 2024 until June 2025 as a commercial property, however no interest / offer was received in relation to continued use of the premises as a commercial/mixed use property, with 90% of the viewers only interested in pursuing alternative residential / HMO uses. The property had stood vacant since 2022.

On this basis, market evidence demonstrates that there is no reasonable prospect of the site being retained or re-developed for either an office or other employment uses.

It is considered that following the loss of this vacant property to HMO, the locality would continue to be adequately served by alternative shopping facilities within the Bolton Road/ Bury Bridge Local Shopping Centre, which stretches for another c. 450 metres north.

It is also important to note the fallback position that a change of use for residential purposes would fall under permitted development. The property currently has a use for offices/commercial which falls under use Class E. Under Part 3 Class MA of the General Permitted Development Order a use falling within Class E (commercial, business and service) of Schedule 2 to the Use Classes Order can change use to residential subject to certain restrictions. The property could therefore be utilised as a dwelling house for a

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large family under permitted development rights, without any consideration to loss of employment use.

Overall, it is considered that given the length of time the property had been vacant and the lack of market interest for continued employment use as demonstrated by market evidence, together with the fallback position of permitted development for residential use, it is considered that the loss of commercial/business use within the Local Shopping Centre would be acceptable in principle and meets the policy test under Policy EC2/2 - 'Employment Land and Premises Outside the Employment Generating Areas' of the Bury Unitary Development Plan, SPD 14: 'Employment Land and Premises' and the National Planning Policy Framework”

Proposed Conversion to HMO Use

The NPPF advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is the role of the planning system to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing needed to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing.

HMOs can make an important contribution to the availability of a diverse housing stock that serves the needs of a large segment of society including graduates, young professionals, key workers, young entrepreneurs, single-households saving for a deposit or unable to get on the housing ladder.

Saved UDP Policy H2/4 however recognises that it is necessary to ensure that HMO conversions do not adversely impact the general character of the area, the amenity of future occupants or neighbouring properties in terms of noise, visual intrusion, or car parking. These matters are addressed further in the below assessment.

Paragraph 3.12 of Bury’s SPD 13 states that HMOs are often best located in vibrant areas that are near a relatively busy highway, well served by public transport, cycle routes and a range of services including shopping and leisure. The application site is situated in close proximity to the services, amenities and local transport connections available along Bolton Road and within Bury Town Centre. The application site is therefore considered to be wholly appropriate for a HMO use.

As discussed above, the property could also be converted to a residential dwellinghouse under permitted development rights via Class MA, for a large family house with a similar level of occupancy.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposals for a change of use to a HMO (use class C4) is consistent with the existing mixed use character of Bolton Road and would not undermine the viability or vitality of the existing Local Shopping Centre. The proposed use will also bring back a long standing vacant building into active use which will add additional footfall to the local high street.

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Overall, the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable, and the proposals are in accordance with considerations for Saved UDP Policy H2/4, the guidance within SPD 13 and the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Amenity of future occupiers

The proposals include 5 x generous en-suite bedrooms with double beds and a large shared communal area including kitchen / dining / living room (23.3 sqm). All bedrooms and communal rooms will be served by an appropriately sited and sized window which will provide an adequate amount of daylight and outlook for future occupants. The proposed scheme will be of a high standard of design in terms of living accommodation, natural lighting and ventilation.

The proposed accommodation meets and exceeds the required HMO licensing standards with bedrooms varying in size between 10.5 sqm and 18.4sqm (plus a separate en-suite bathroom) in order to cater for a diverse range of product and price points.

The developer has a proven track record of delivering high-quality HMOs, designed for long-term occupation by working professionals. **Appendix 2** includes photographs of similar projects, demonstrating the high-quality fit-out and finishes. The target market is working professionals, ensuring a stable, long-term tenant profile and contributing to the local community. A professional property management company will oversee tenant selection, ensuring responsible occupation and maintenance.

The Council's **Reason for Refusal (item 2 & 4)** states that:

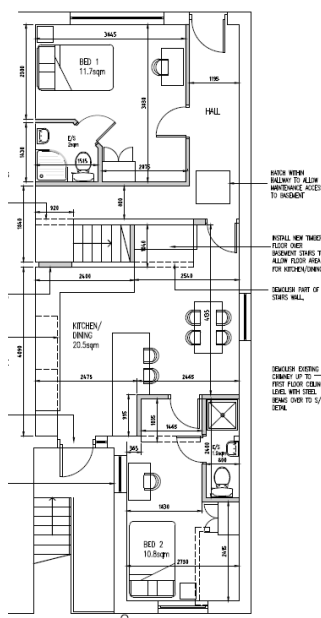
- *“The proposed development, by virtue having a bedroom located adjacent to the shared kitchen and dining area with its associated noise, disturbance and cooking odours, would result in conditions detrimental to the amenity of future occupiers of Bedroom 1 within the proposed development. The proposed development therefore conflicts with policies H1/2 - Further Housing Development, H2/1 - The Form of New Residential Development, H2/2: 'The Layout of New Residential Development', and H2/4: 'Conversions' of the Bury Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning Document 13 - Conversion of Buildings to Houses in Multiple Occupation and the National Planning Policy Framework.”(item 2); and*
- *“The proposed development fails to demonstrate that future occupiers of the development would have a clear and safe route internally to enable them to safely and easily dispose of their rubbish within bins located within the rear yard area, contrary to Policies H2/1 - The Form of New Residential Development, H2/2: 'The Layout of New Residential Development', and H2/4: 'Conversions' of*

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*the Bury Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning Document 13 -
Conversion of Buildings to Houses in Multiple Occupation and the National
Planning Policy Framework.” (item 4)*

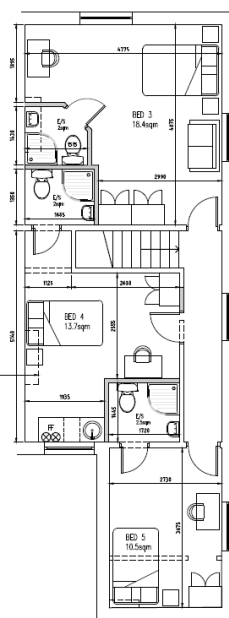
Taking into account the above reasons for refusal, the internal layout on the ground floor was revised to locate the communal amenity space along the front elevation facing onto Bolton Road, and Bedroom 1 & 2 towards the back and away from sources of road traffic and commercial noise. This arrangement also avoids direct access from the communal amenity space into a bedroom, and provides additional separation via a corridor. The internal partition wall between the communal amenity and Bedroom 1 will be acoustically treated to ensure appropriate sound proofing in accordance with Building Regulations (Approved Document E).

Previous Layout (refused)

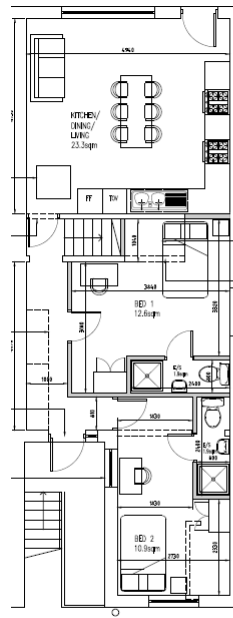


PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1:100 @ A3

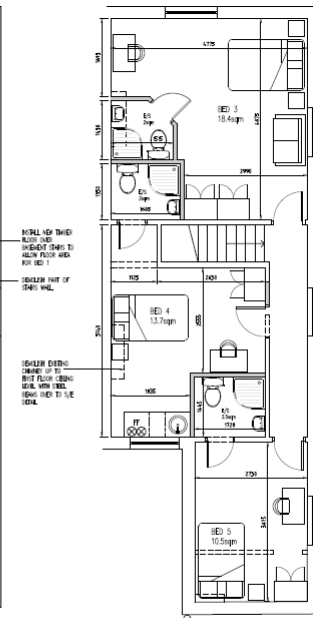
Revised Layout (current application)



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1:100 @ A3



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1:100 @ A3



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1:100 @ A3

Future occupants will also have access to a small external garden space to the rear of the property and secured cycle storage in the basement, which can be accessed from the rear garden with direct access to the back road via the new boundary gate.

With regards to the bin storage area, the previously refused proposals provided direct access from the communal amenity space to the bin storage area in the rear garden, via the back door and steps, and therefore it is considered that the proposals were misunderstood by Officers. Notwithstanding this, the revised ground floor layout proposes a new access corridor between the communal amenity space and the rear

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garden which will provide a clear and safe route internally to enable future occupiers to safely and easily dispose of their rubbish within bins located within the rear yard area.

It is therefore considered that future occupants of the HMO would be provided with satisfactory living conditions and the proposals are deemed acceptable in terms of residential amenity, having addressed the reasons for refusal on the previous application.

Neighbouring Occupiers

The application site is located on the end of a terrace and is bounded by a vacant commercial property along the southern elevation. Further along this row of terraces, there is a takeaway shop (Hong Kong), a beauty salon (Tangled Hair and Beauty), 2x residential properties and another take away shop (Krung Theph Thai Kitchen).

The Council's **Reason for Refusal (item 3)** states that: *"Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the main road the property is sited upon and the sites' location close to a hot-food takeaway would not cause noise intrusion or odour issues to future occupiers of the proposed development, nor whether any measures to protect their amenity would harm the host building or the visual amenity of the street scene. Therefore, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies H2/4: 'Conversions', EN7/2: 'Noise Pollution' of the Bury Unitary Development Plan, Policy JP-S5: 'Clean Air' of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework."*

The Officer's Report also makes reference to a flue located at the Chinese take away two properties down from the application site. This can be seen on the image below. It is however noted that this flue is located some distance away from any existing windows and the proposed habitable rooms of the application site. Notwithstanding, this has been considered as part of the noise impact assessment in terms of the proposed internal ventilation measures.

A Noise Impact Assessment was undertaken by Acoustic & Engineering Consultants Limited (AEC) and submitted in support of this planning application. This confirms that the dominant noise source at the property was observed to be road traffic along Bolton Road. The noise assessment also covers the implications of the external noise levels on the control of overheating based on the AVO guidance for habitable rooms during the day time and recommends appropriate mitigation measures.

The assessment carried out noise break-in calculations to determine the acoustic requirements of the glazing and ventilation necessary to achieve appropriate internal noise levels. The report confirms that mitigation measures are required in the form of acoustic ventilators and enhanced acoustic glazing to control internal noise levels in all

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habitable rooms during both the daytime and night-time periods of the proposed development, which can be secured by an appropriately worded noise condition.

It is also noted that the ground floor layout has been revised since the previous application to ensure that habitable rooms are located away from the main noise sources on Bolton Road and any future commercial use located adjacent. The communal amenity along the Bolton Road frontage provides a buffer to the two bedrooms along the back, and the new residential corridor on the ground floor provides further separation distance between the party wall with the commercial units and the two bedrooms located on the ground floor, with the other 3 bedrooms located on the upper floor.



Overall, the proposed conversion from commercial to a 5-bed HMO would be acceptable in relation to the residential amenity of neighbours and future occupants, and would not have a detrimental impact on the existing local businesses nearby or the future occupants of the scheme, and as such complies with Saved UDP Policy H2/4 part a and part c, and the guidance within SPD 6 and SPD 13.

Impact on Transport and Highways Safety

Car Parking

The site is located in a sustainable and accessible location along a local high street and in close proximity to Bury Town Centre with access to local businesses, amenities and services within the surrounding area. The site also benefits from good public transport links, including frequent bus services and close proximity to Bury Metrolink and Bury Interchange.

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This is confirmed by the site's allocation within Zone 2 as shown on Appendix 1 of SPD 11. The site can therefore be considered to be located in a sustainable location, thereby reducing reliance upon private car use.

The existing property has no off-street parking, however the existing row of mixed use properties (including the application site) is served by a public car parking area to the rear along Back Bolton Road South and along Fountain Street. There are currently 3 x operational commercial units (take away shops and beauty salon) and a couple of residential properties, with the rest of the buildings being vacant. As these facilities are located within the Local Shopping Centre which *“primarily serve the day to day needs of residents who live nearby”* it can be expected that a large number of customers would arrive on foot, but for those needing a car parking space, there is good availability of parking along the rear or on Fountain Street.

Bury Council's parking standards within Zone 2 requires 0.25 unallocated spaces per bedroom for HMOs. For the proposed 5 bed HMO, this would equate to 1.25 parking spaces. SPD 11 (June 2025) acknowledges that *“HMOs and shared housing tend to attract occupiers with lower than average levels of car ownership compared to the general population”* (para 4.34)

Due to the site's high level of sustainability and accessibility, it is not considered necessary for future residents to own a car. The nature of the accommodation also means that it will be less likely that future residents will own a car as HMO uses tend to have a lower level of car usage than a single residential dwelling and it is generally expected that town centre living would not necessarily or automatically provide parking. However, for those who do require access to a car, there is good availability of car parking within the surrounding streets which would be able to accommodate the shortfall of 1.25 car parking space as per the policy requirement.

In terms of assessing highways matters paragraph 116 of the NPPF is relevant which advises *‘Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe’*. This is a high policy test and it is not considered that the development for a 5-bedroom, 6 persons HMO would be associated with severe adverse highway impacts which would warrant a refusal.

The Officer's Report for the previous application confirms: *“Given the site is located in an accessible location by virtue of its position within the allocated Local Centre the proposed development and its lack off of-street car parking provision, is considered to be acceptable, for this particular development.”*

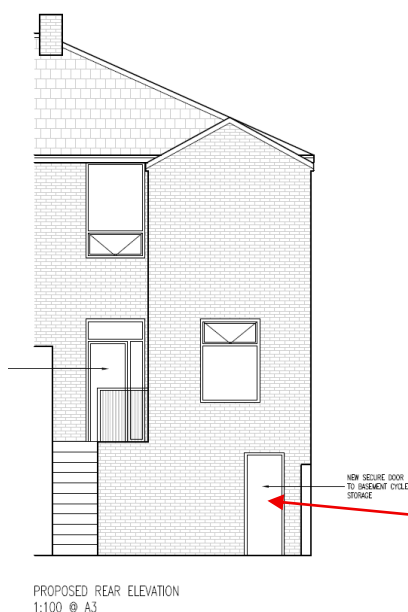
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The Council's highways team had no objection to the previous 5-bed HMO proposals and the reasons for refusal included no transport / highways related matters. On this basis, the proposed HMO is considered to be acceptable in this location.

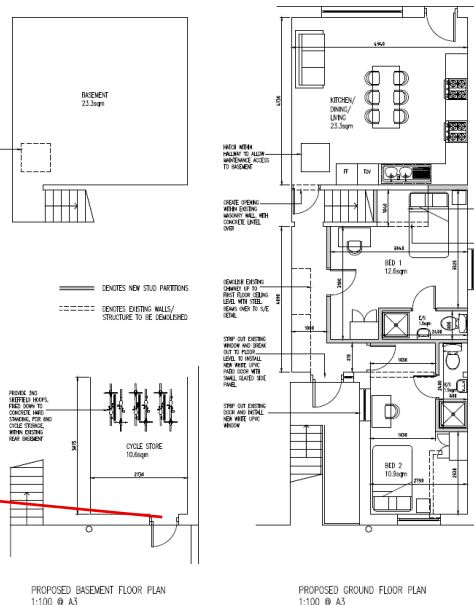
Cycle Parking

The proposals will accommodate a secure and covered cycle store (6 spaces) in the basement as indicated on the submitted drawings. This will promote cycling as a viable and attractive means of travel. The level of provision proposed within the scheme will also help to support a reduction in reliance upon the private car and help to encourage use of more environmentally friendly and sustainable modes of transport amongst future residents.

Rear Elevation showing access to cycle store in basement



Basement and Ground Floors



The Council's **Reason for Refusal (item 5)** states: *"The application and submitted plans fail to provide sufficient covered and secure bike storage provision within the application site, to satisfy the Local Planning Authority that the applicant is satisfactorily mitigating the parking impacts of their development and encouraging more sustainable travel to and from the site as required by Policies JP-C1: 'An Integrated Network', JP-C5 'Streets for All', JP-C6: Walking and Cycling and JP-C8: 'Transport Requirements of New Development' of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework."*

As per the previous application, cycle parking is provided in the basement, which can be accessed from the rear garden with direct access to the back road via the new

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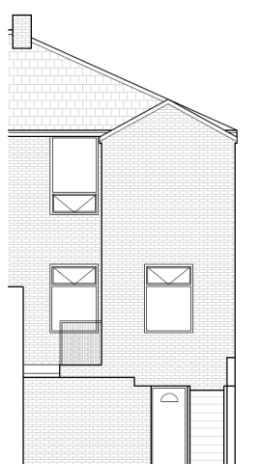
boundary gate. It is therefore considered that Officer's misunderstood the previous proposals and cycle parking provision was incorrectly listed as a reason for refusal.

Rear Boundary Access for Bin Storage and Cycle Parking

The Council's **Reason for Refusal (item 6)** stated that: *"The applicant has failed to demonstrate whether the existing yard gate within the rear boundary wall of the property would need to be widened to satisfy providing sufficient refuse storage provision to serve the needs of the future occupiers of the development, thereby the proposal is poorly designed and may lead to bins being stored on the adopted highway and causing an obstruction to pedestrians, to the detriment of highway safety and securing well-designed development. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the requirements of H2/4: 'Conversions' of the Bury Unitary Development Plan, Policy JP-C5: 'Streets for All' and JP-C8: 'Transport Requirements of New Development' of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide."*

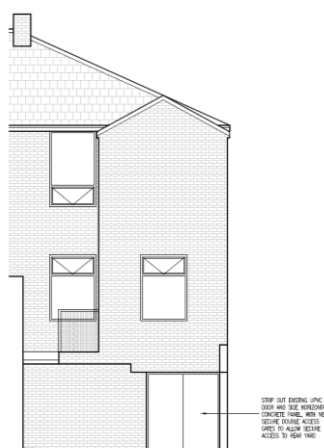
The revised proposals include the replacement of the existing yard gate with a new double gate along the rear boundary wall to ensure access to the rear garden is sufficiently wide to aid refuse collection. Revised proposed elevation and site plans are submitted showing the new boundary wall gate and the location of the bin storage area, which is considered to address the previous reason for refusal.

Existing Rear Boundary Wall & Gate



EXISTING REAR/BOUNDARY ELEVATION
1:100 @ A3

Proposed Rear Boundary Wall & Gate



PROPOSED REAR/BOUNDARY ELEVATION
1:100 @ A3

Overall, it is therefore considered that the proposed development accords with the transport requirements of the NPPF; Saved Policy HT2/4, and would be acceptable

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when assessed against part e of Saved Policy H2/4 and the relevant guidance within SPD 11.

Energy and Sustainability

The Council's **Reason for Refusal (Item 7)** states that: *"The application and submitted plans and supporting statements contain insufficient information to enable the local planning authority to assess whether the proposal would maximise reductions in carbon emissions, as required by Policy JP-S2 - Carbon and Energy of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework."*

However, it is considered that the previous proposals were misunderstood by Officers as the below statement was included to address how the proposed HMO conversion would seek to maximise reduction in carbon emission and improve the energy efficiency of the existing building.

In compliance with local and national policy, the proposed development prioritises the minimisation of energy demand and maximisation of energy efficiency through the following measures:

- **High Insulation Standards:**
 - The development will feature highly insulated walls and ceiling cavities to reduce heat loss and enhance thermal efficiency.
 - Double glazing will be installed throughout the property to further improve insulation and reduce energy consumption. This ensures compliance with Part L Building Regulations.
 - Passive performance will be enhanced through improving the fabric efficiency with double glazing and insulation as well as the efficiency of the existing internal layout.
- **Renewable Energy Sources:**
 - Due to the building orientation and lack of solar gain on the roof, the installation of solar PV panels is not feasible.
 - The building will use a conventional boiler with water tank system due to the high demand for hot water from six separate hot water stations. ASHP is not viable under the current design.
 - We commit to opting for renewable energy sources when selecting gas and electricity suppliers for the building, ensuring a greener energy supply.
- **Smart Thermostats:**
 - Smart thermostats will be installed throughout the property to enable precise control over heating and cooling, enhancing energy efficiency and user comfort. This improves thermal regulation and supports sustainability goals.
- **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating:**
 - We aim to achieve a high EPC rating of C or above, demonstrating our commitment to energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- **Regular Maintenance:**

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- The property will undergo regular maintenance, with bi-annual reviews to ensure all energy-saving measures are functioning optimally and to identify opportunities for further improvements.

These measures align with the 2022 Part L Building Regulations and underscore our dedication to creating a sustainable and energy-efficient development. The proposals will therefore comply with Places for Everyone Policy JP-S2.

Digital Connectivity

The Council's **Reason for Refusal (item 8)** states that: *"The application and submitted plans and supporting statements contain insufficient information to demonstrate that the proposal would comprise high quality digital infrastructure, as required by Policies JP-C1: 'An Integrated Network' and JP-C2: 'Digital Connectivity' of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan."*

However, it is considered that the previous proposals were misunderstood by Officers as the below statement was included to address how the proposed HMO conversion will provide high-quality digital infrastructure.

In compliance with local Places for Everyone policy JP-C2, the proposed development will support high-quality digital infrastructure through the following measures:

- Full Fibre Connections:
 - Fibre optic cables will be installed to the property, ensuring superfast internet connections with a minimum speed of 500 Mbps.
- Mesh Wi-Fi System:
 - A mesh Wi-Fi system will be deployed throughout the property, guaranteeing consistent high-quality internet coverage in every corner and on every floor.
- Cat 6 Network Points:
 - Cat 6 network points will be installed on each floor, providing robust and reliable wired internet connections for high-speed data transfer.

By implementing these measures, the proposed development will ensure compliance with Policy JP-C2, delivering superior digital connectivity that meets the demands of modern living and enhances the overall functionality of the property.

Conclusion

The proposed development to convert the existing vacant commercial property to a 5-bedroom, 6-occupants HMO (use class C4) is considered to comply with local and national planning policy as demonstrated in the above planning assessment and should therefore be granted planning permission.

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Appendix 1 – Market Evidence from Estate Agent

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Appendix 2 - Images of other HMOs managed by the Applicant

