

# Design & Access and Supporting Planning Statement

## Site and Surrounding Area

This site is located at no. 156 Walmersley Road in Bury and contains an existing two storey mid-terrace property with a dormer conversion and a basement (overall 4 floors). The building has been operated as a 6-bed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (use class C4) under Permitted Development Rights. The site also contains a small rear garden which is covered by hardstanding and backs onto Back Walmersley Road East.

Walmersley Road is a busy artery road (A56) into Bury Town Centre characterised by a mix of residential and business / commercial uses. The property is located in a highly sustainable location from both public transport and local amenities perspectives; in close proximity to Bury Town Centre (10 minutes walking distance) as well as Bury Tram and Bus Interchange (within 20 minutes walking distance). There is also a bus stop available just outside the property.



Figure 1 The application site

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### **Proposed Development**

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing 6-bedroom HMO (use class C4) to a 9-bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) and associated external works to create a lightwell and install a new window to the existing basement.

The proposals seek to internally refurbish the property to high quality standards to create 9-bedrooms with designated en-suites and a generous communal kitchen, living, dining area.

The proposals will also include a new secure and covered cycle parking facility in the rear garden and a bin storage area to accommodate the required capacity of waste storage (general and recycling).

### **Planning Assessment**

#### Principle of Development

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.

The site is located in an urban area within a residential setting in a highly sustainable location within 10 minutes walking distance to Bury Town Centre. The property has been operating under permitted development as a 6-bed HMO under Class C4. The proposed development would continue to provide residential accommodation and as such the use would not conflict with the character of the surrounding area in principle.

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 or the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of noise, visual intrusion, or car parking.

Whilst Bury Council does not have a 'threshold limit' on the number of HMO within a given area, upon review of 'Bury Council's Register of Licensed HMOs', there are currently 3 existing licensed HMO properties within a 100 miles radius from the application site. These are located at No. 142, 146, 148 Welmersley Road - see below map.

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Figure 2 HMO properties within a 100m radius from Application Site

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 and amenities available within Bury Town Centre, located on Walmersley Road which is a main arterial route into the town centre, and is well served by non-car modes of transport. The application site is therefore considered to be wholly appropriate for a HMO use.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposals to increase density on site from a 6-bedroom to a 9-bedroom HMO would not undermine the character of the existing residential area nor would it cause undue harm by noise, disturbance or visual intrusion.

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 9 x generous en-suite bedrooms with double beds and a large shared communal area including kitchen / dining / living room. All bedrooms and communal rooms will be served by an appropriately sited and sized window which will

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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 10.7 sqm and 20sqm (plus a separate en-suite bathroom) in order to cater for a diverse range of product and price points. It is recognised that a HMO license will be required for the property.

Future occupants will also have access to a garden space to the rear of the property and secured cycle storage.

The developer has a proven track record of delivering high-quality HMOs, designed for long-term occupation by working professionals. **Appendix 1** 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.

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.

### *Neighbouring Occupiers*

The application site is bounded on both sides by residential dwellings. The proposed 9-bed HMO is considered to be compatible with the neighbouring uses given the dwelling will also remain in residential use.

The property has been and can lawfully be occupied as a HMO with up to 6 occupiers under Permitted Development Rights and this application seeks consent for an additional 3 occupiers.

It is recognised that the proposed 9-bed HMO would increase occupancy of the property and therefore the levels of activity associated with the site. However, it is not considered that the uplift in activity at the site or the comings and goings associated with a HMO of this size, would be so significant to create harm, considering the property could accommodate a 6-bed HMO with similar occupancy levels (if some of the rooms were dual occupancy).

For these reasons it is not considered that the proposal to use the property as an 9-bed HMO would result in neighbouring residents experiencing an unacceptable loss of amenity in terms of noise and disturbance.

Overall, the proposed conversion from 6-bed to 9-bed HMO is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the amenity of existing residents or future occupants of the

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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

The site is located in a sustainable and accessible location close to Bury Town Centre with access to commercial 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. This is confirmed by the site's allocation as an 'Area of High Accessibility in Bury' as per the map included at Appendix 1 of SPD 11 (Parking Standards in Bury).

The site can therefore be considered to be located in a sustainable location, thereby reducing reliance upon private car use.

Bury Council has no specific car parking standards for HMO use. Due to the site's high level of sustainability and accessibility, it is not considered necessary for future residents to own a car, furthermore SPD 11 states that lower parking thresholds will be applied to areas of high accessibility. 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. The property has been and can lawfully be occupied as a HMO with up to 6 occupiers under Permitted Development Rights and this application seeks consent for an additional 3 occupiers.

The proposals will accommodate a secure and covered cycle store 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.

In terms of assessing highways matters paragraph 111 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 an additional 3 bedrooms would be associated with severe adverse highway impacts which would warrant a refusal.

The application is accompanied by a Highways Technical Note prepared by AXIS which confirms that the proposed development accords with the transport requirements of the NPPF; Saved Policy HT2/4, and would be acceptable when assessed against part e of Saved Policy H2/4 and the relevant guidance within SPD 11.

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### **Conclusion**

The proposed development to convert the existing 6-bed HMO to a 9-bed HMO 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 - Images of other HMOs managed by the Applicant

