

GSS24124 – Morning Star, 25 Thomas Street - Planning Statement

Introduction

This Planning and Design Statement has been prepared on behalf of SHLT Holdings Ltd in support of a full planning application for a first floor side extension, first floor rear extension and a single storey rear extension, to accommodate a 15 Bedroom 18 Person HMO.

Accordingly, this Statement addresses the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development in respect of the location, use, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping – in relation to the site's context.

The submissions display that the development proposal is fully compliant with requirements and supportable in planning and design terms.

Site

The application site is situated in Bury Council, at 25 Thomas Street, M26 3AP.

The property is located in the secondary retail area of Radcliffe Town Centre, this property faces Thomas Street. The building includes an enclosed yard at the rear, which houses multiple single-story ancillary structures and an open paved area.

The site is strategically located between two public car parks, one to the immediate north and another to the south. East of the property, across Thomas Street, there's an additional public car park and a small parkland. To the west, the site backs onto the rear facades and yard spaces of commercial premises situated on Blackburn Street.

Benefitting from its location on the northern edge of Radcliffe Town Centre, the property offers excellent public transport access, boasting a Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) of 5. It is also conveniently within walking distance of the diverse shops and services available in the town centre.

The dwelling on the site comprises of an existing part single, part two storey, detached building which was most recently occupied as "The Morning Star" Public House prior to falling vacant in June 2022.

The site has previously been marketed by commercial agents Pearson Farrier since 2022, and remains unoccupied to the present day.

The site, currently under recent new ownership, now possesses planning permission to convert it from the Pub to a 10 Bedroom HMO, which was granted in January 2025.

The site is positioned within a highly accessible and sustainable location. Please refer to the extract of the Site Location Plan and site images below.

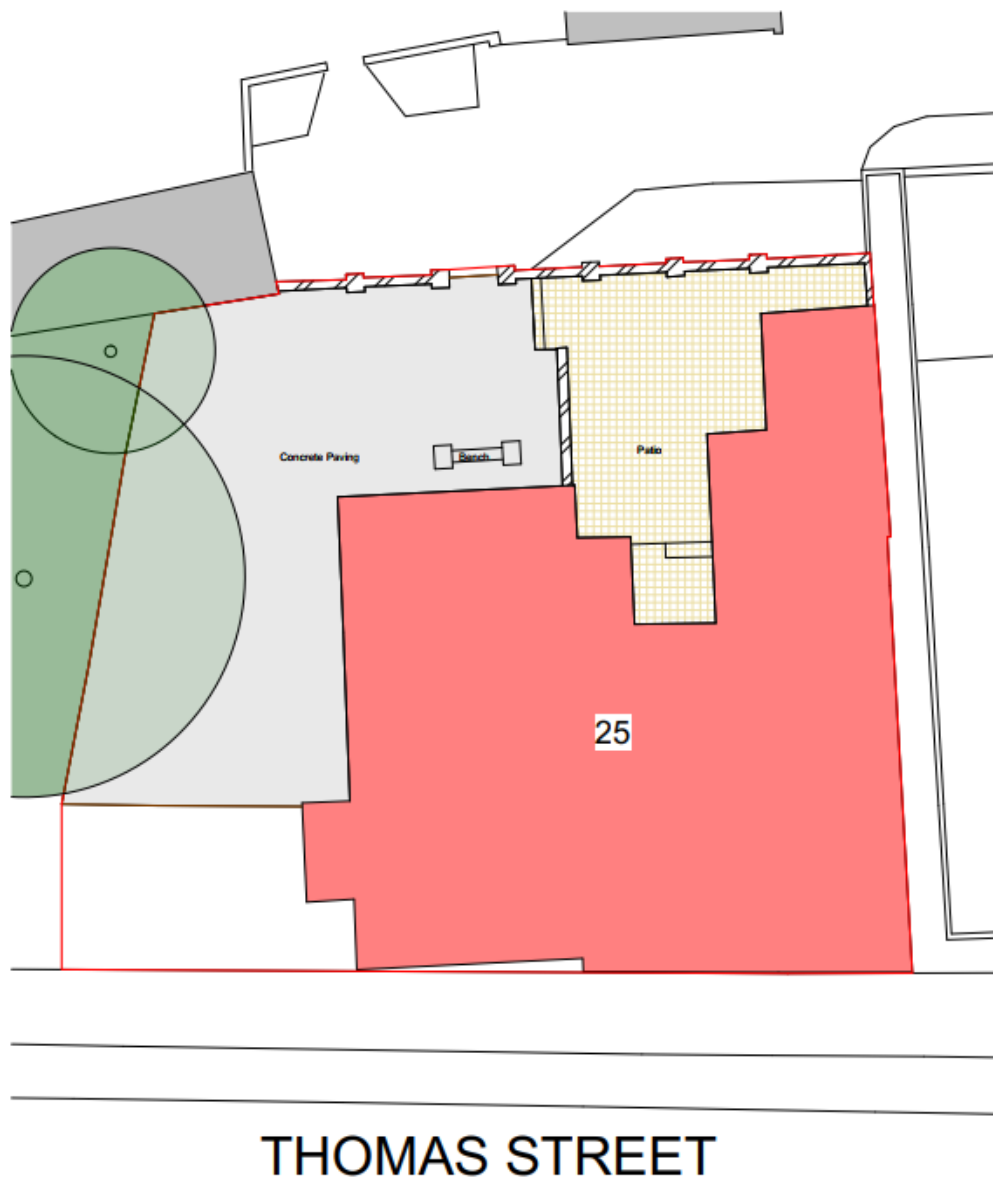
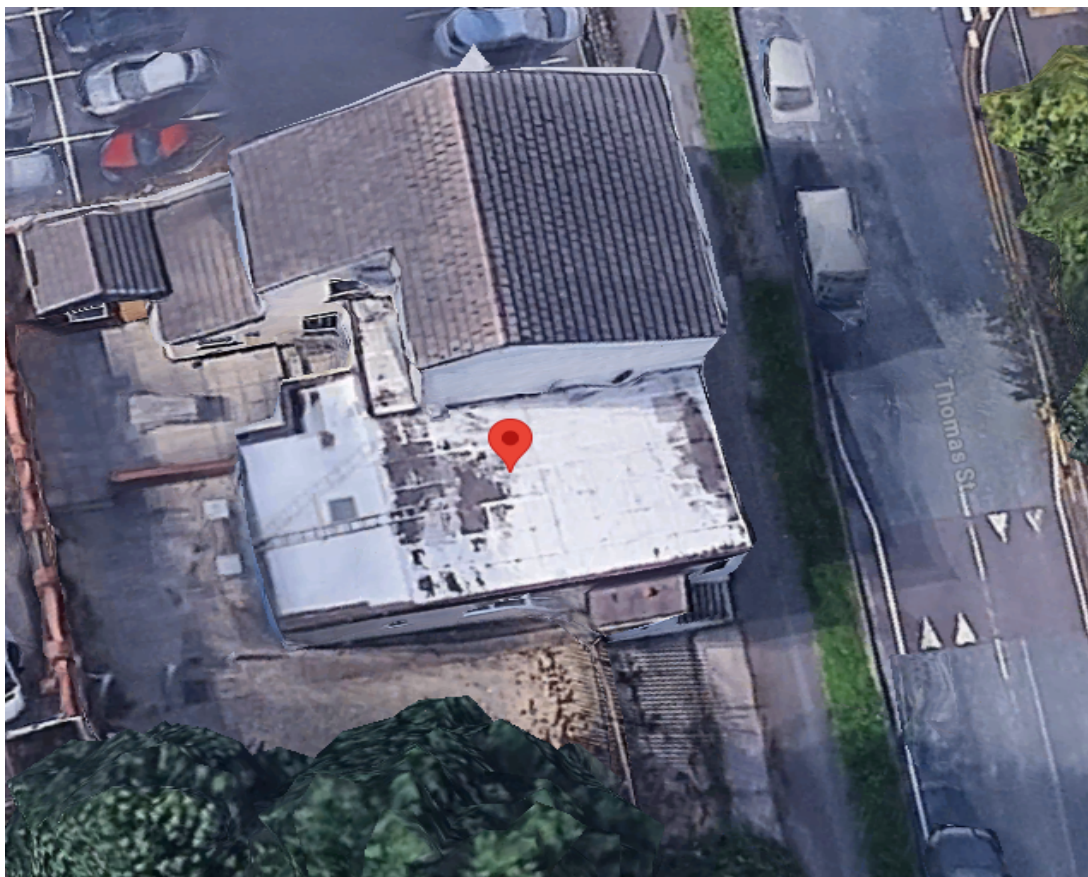


Image of site location plan – extent of existing site highlighted in red



Ariel View of Morning Star, demonstrating that it is positioned between two public car parks.



Ariel View of existing Site demonstrating part single storey, part double storey

Planning History

Application Ref 71353 – which was validated on 14/12/2025 – sought permission for “Change of use from Public House (sui generis) to a 10 Bedroom (single occupancy) HMO” under a Full Planning Application.

This Full Planning Application was Approved on the 29/01/2025.

This Application went to committee meeting and was recommended for approval and indeed was approved.

Proposal

The application seeks consent to extend the dwelling to accommodate a 15 Bedroom 18 Person HMO, through the erection of a single storey rear extension, a first-floor side extension and a first-floor rear extension.

There would be internal reconfiguration to the existing bedrooms and the proposed project will increase the number of bedrooms on the ground floor from 6 to 7 and at the first-floor level, from 4 to 8.

Every bedroom in the HMO will feature a private en-suite bathroom. All these rooms will either meet or surpass the minimum size requirements outlined in Bury Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Guidance and Amenity Standards document. Furthermore, each of the fifteen bedrooms will include generous windows, ensuring ample natural light and pleasant views for residents.

A large communal kitchen/dining area is also proposed at ground floor level which similarly meets all space and facility standards set out within the Houses in Multiple Occupation Guidance and Amenity Standards document and will therefore provide a high quality living environment for occupiers. The minimum size required by Bury Council for an HMO of 16+ people, is 29 square metres. The proposed kitchen exceeds that and measures 31.2 square metres and will comfortably fit the 1:5 ratio. In addition to the kitchen/dining area, there is also an extra utility room to accommodate washing machine/dryers etc. which is an additional 4.3 square metres, just off the communal kitchen.

Although there is no communal lounge, each of the large bedrooms have been designed to meet/exceed the minimum the **space standards set out by Bury Council of Combined Bedroom and Living Room** – thus each bedroom functions as a lounge space for its inhabitants too.

	Number of persons	
Where the room is for the sole use of occupier(s)	1	2 (cohabiting)
Bedroom	6.5m ²	10.2m ²
Kitchen	4m ²	5m ²
Combined kitchen and living room	11m ²	15m ²
Combined bedroom and kitchen	11m ²	15m ²
Combined bedroom and living room	10m ²	14m ²
Combined bedroom, living room & kitchen	13m ²	20.5m ²

Additionally, the proposal includes a large eat-in kitchen to allow for communal interaction for those who wish.

The provided drawings illustrate that the rear yard includes a spacious communal amenity space for all residents, and additionally will also feature dedicated storage for bicycles and refuse.

Relevant Planning Policies

This section provides a review of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance:

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, last revised in December 2023, is the cornerstone of the UK Government's planning policy, aiming to achieve **sustainable development**. Its core principle is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**.

Key takeaways from the NPPF include:

1. **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development:** Development proposals aligning with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay. If policies are absent or outdated, permission should be granted unless specific protective policies apply or the negative impacts demonstrably and significantly outweigh the benefits.
2. **Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development:** Sustainable development encompasses **economic, social, and environmental** gains, which should be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Planning policies should guide development towards sustainable solutions while considering local circumstances.
3. **Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes:** The NPPF emphasizes significantly boosting housing supply, ensuring a variety of land is available, addressing specific housing needs, and developing permitted land promptly.

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must maintain a **five-year supply of deliverable housing sites**, with specific buffers (10% or 20% depending on past delivery). If an LPA cannot demonstrate this, or if housing delivery is substantially below requirements, relevant housing supply policies are considered out of date, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

4. **Promoting Sustainable Transport:** Development should prioritize pedestrians and cyclists, have access to high-quality public transport, address disability needs, minimize traffic conflicts, allow efficient deliveries, and enable EV charging.
5. **Making Effective Use of Land:** The planning system should promote efficient land use, particularly through the use of **previously-developed (brownfield) land** within settlements for new homes. It also supports developing **under-utilised land and buildings**, especially for housing where land supply is constrained. Upward extensions above existing premises are encouraged if consistent with prevailing character and design. Efficient land use should consider housing need, market conditions, infrastructure capacity, character, and creating well-designed places.
6. **Achieving Well-Designed Places:** Developments should function well, enhance overall quality, be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, create a strong sense of place, optimize site potential for appropriate development mix, and create safe, inclusive, accessible, and health-promoting places.
7. **Decision Taking:** LPAs should take a positive and creative approach, proactively working with planners to secure developments that improve economic, social, and environmental conditions. Sustainable development applications should be approved where possible.

Summary of Bury Council's Local Policy (Development Plan)

Bury's Development Plan primarily consists of the **Unitary Development Plan (UDP) from August 1997**, supplemented by various Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Guidance.

Key relevant policies are:

1. **UDP Policy H2/4 (Conversions - HMOs):** This policy specifically addresses applications for converting buildings into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). It requires consideration of the proposal's impact on:
 - **Amenity of neighbours:** Noise, visual intrusion, entrance positions, parking areas, extensions, and fire escapes.
 - **General character of the area:** Including existing concentration of flats.

- **Amenity of occupants:** Ensuring suitable living conditions.
 - **Street scene:** External appearance changes.
 - **Car parking and servicing requirements.**
2. **UDP Policy S1 (Existing Shopping Centres) & S1/2 (Shopping in Other Town Centres):** These policies aim to protect, maintain, and enhance the role of existing shopping centres, specifically seeking to maintain and strengthen the retail role of **Radcliffe Town Centre**. While modest increases in shopping floorspace are supported, the main emphasis is on consolidation and enhancement.
3. **UDP Policy S2/3 (Secondary Shopping Areas and Frontages):** This policy is critical for your project as the property is in a "secondary retail area." It seeks to maintain retailing as the predominant ground floor use. Proposals for change of use (like yours) are assessed on their merits considering:
- Design and appearance of the proposed frontage.
 - Maintenance or provision of a display window at ground floor (where appropriate).
 - Access for the mobility impaired.
 - Potential for disturbance or nuisance.
 - **Crucially, if the proposal leads to more than 40% of the secondary shopping frontage being non-retail (Class A1) use, additional factors are considered:** location and prominence, number/distribution/proximity of other non-retail uses, and the nature/character/activity level of the proposed use.
4. **Development Control Policy Guidance Note 13 (Conversion of Buildings to Houses in Multiple Occupation - SPD, May 2007):** This SPD supports and expands on UDP Policy H2/4. It acknowledges past negative perceptions of HMOs and aims to ensure proposals avoid these issues while providing adequate living standards.
- **Location Guidance:** The SPD directs HMOs to areas that are:
 - On or near a relatively busy highway.
 - Well served by public transport.
 - Well served by cycle routes.
 - Well served by a range of services (shopping, leisure).

Planning Considerations and Project Justification

The proposal of converting Morning Star pub into a 15-bedroom, 18-person HMO can be strongly justified under national planning policy, particularly given the NPPF's emphasis on **sustainable development, housing supply, and effective land use**

- **Sustainable Development** - The project aligns with the overarching principle of sustainable development by bringing an existing, potentially under-utilised building back into effective use to provide much-needed housing. It demonstrates a positive approach to development that seeks to improve social conditions (housing). The proposal is inherently sustainable because it reuses an existing building, reducing the need for greenfield development and contributing to the efficient use of land.
- **Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes & Addressing Specific Housing Requirements** - The conversion directly contributes to the government's commitment to "significantly boosting the supply of homes" (Paragraph 60). An HMO specifically addresses the "needs of groups with specific housing requirements," such as young professionals, key workers, or individuals seeking affordable, flexible living arrangements. In areas with high housing demand, HMOs play a vital role in diversifying the housing stock.
- **Making Effective Use of Land** - This project represents a prime example of "making as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land" (Paragraph 124(c)). A former pub is definitively a brownfield site within a settlement. The conversion of an "under-utilised land and building" (Paragraph 124(d)) directly addresses the NPPF's call to promote such development, especially to meet housing needs where land supply is constrained. The proposal is not a greenfield site, but rather regenerating an existing structure. This aligns perfectly with the NPPF's preference for brownfield development and efficient land use. Specifically, since the pub has been vacant, due to the fact that it was struggling and underperforming and sat on the market for a long time, further highlights the "under-utilised" aspect.

Promoting Sustainable Transport - The location of the former pub is within an established urban area, with good access to public transport, walking, and cycling routes. The proposal will inherently benefit from this existing infrastructure. The provision of dedicated cycle storage (as displayed in the drawings) directly responds to the NPPF's emphasis on "giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements." The site boasts a public transport rating of GMAL 5 situated in close proximity to public transport links. This reduces reliance on private cars for future occupants, contributing to sustainable transport goals.

Achieving Well-Designed Places - The proposal will transform a potentially derelict or struggling building into a functional, attractive residential property. The commitment to all en-suite bedrooms meeting or exceeding Bury Council's size standards, and the provision of large windows for outlook and natural light,

demonstrates a clear focus on creating a "well-designed place" that will "function well and add to the overall quality of the area" (Paragraph 135).

The high quality of the internal environment and the commitment to high living standards for the residents will counter any potential concerns about over-densification and highlights the positive contribution to the local area.

Economic, Social, and Environmental Gains – This proposal delivers on all these three pillars of sustainable development:

- **Economic** - Re-using a building prevents demolition costs and waste, supports local construction jobs during conversion, and generates council tax revenue.
- **Social** - Provides much-needed housing, especially for specific demographics, potentially contributing to a more diverse and vibrant community. It can also prevent a building from becoming a derelict eyesore, which has social benefits for the immediate neighbourhood.
- **Environmental** - Reusing an existing building has a lower carbon footprint than new build on a greenfield site. Efficient use of land reduces urban sprawl.

The proposal can further be justified by it's compliance and fulfilment of Bury's Local Policy concerning Pub-to-HMO Conversions:

Compliance with UDP Policy H2/4 (Conversions - HMOs):

- **Amenity of Neighbours** - The conversion to residential use (HMO) will likely *reduce* noise disturbance compared to a pub, especially late-night activity. Visual intrusion will be minimal as the external changes are expected to be sympathetic. Entrances, parking, and fire escapes will be designed to minimize impact.
- **General Character of the Area** - The proposal involves the conversion of an existing building, rather than new build, which helps maintain the established built character. While it introduces residential use, this is within a mixed-use town centre context. Furthermore, an HMO, while residential, is different from a block of flats and its scale is appropriate for a town centre setting. Additionally, this will be a well-managed and frequently serviced HMO which will integrate into the mixed-use character of a town centre, particularly since there are already other residential conversions and existing residential properties nearby.
- **Amenity of Occupants** - All bedrooms within the HMO will benefit from a dedicated en-suite and all of them will either meet, or comfortably exceed, the minimum size standards set out within Bury Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Guidance and Amenity Standards document. All fifteen bedrooms will benefit from large windows providing good levels of outlook and sunlight/daylight for occupiers." The provision of bedrooms which are large

enough to function as living space, also ensures high living standards. The proposal will provide high quality of living environment for future residents, directly addressing the policy's concern for occupant amenity

Compliant with UDP Policies S1, S1/2, and S2/3 (Shopping Centre Policies):

While this policy aims to maintain retailing as the predominant ground floor use in secondary shopping areas, this proposal converts a *former* pub, which is already a non-retail (Class A1) use. We are not converting an active shop. The building was a pub (Class A4/Drinking Establishment) and not a retail unit (Class A1), therefore, it's not directly removing a retail frontage.

Conclusion

The Morning Star public house has been vacant since June 2022, and despite being actively marketed, there's been no demand for its continued use as a pub. This clearly demonstrates that the site is underutilised and ripe for a new purpose. Our proposal to convert and extend the former Morning Star Public House at 25 Thomas Street, Radcliffe, into a 15-bedroom, 18-person House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is the ideal solution, bringing a valuable building back into productive use and meeting a pressing housing need.

This project strongly promotes sustainable development by breathing new life into a brownfield site. We're not just adding to the housing supply; we're doing it in a way that's smart and efficient. The location boasts excellent public transport links (GMAL 5) and we're including dedicated cycle storage, encouraging greener travel habits for future residents.

We've meticulously designed the HMO to create a high-quality living environment. Every bedroom will be en-suite, exceed minimum size requirements, and benefit from ample natural light to create comfortable, well-designed accommodation.

This proposal offers clear economic, social, and environmental benefits. It will support local construction jobs, generate council tax revenue, and provide much-needed housing, especially for demographics seeking affordable and flexible living. By reusing an existing building, we're reducing demolition waste and minimizing our carbon footprint compared to new construction on a greenfield site.

This proposal transforms a struggling, vacant property into a vibrant residential asset that will positively contribute to the area, meeting the demand for additional housing.