



Regional Winner
Best HMO Investor



PROPERTY
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AWARDS

FINALIST 2023

Plans to transform 1-5 Porter Street, Bury into an exciting co-living space for young professionals

Our reasons for writing to you

We are writing to you regarding the ongoing planning application submitted to Bury Council for our property at 1 Porter Street, Bury, BL9 6DZ.

We understand that some residents from your ward have raised concerns about our proposed development, and we would like to offer reassurance regarding our intentions to develop high-quality Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) at this property.

The property was purchased with the intention of delivering a well-managed and high-standard HMO scheme, similar to those we have successfully completed in the past. For reference, we have included details of a comparable past project on Walmersley Road, which is part of our portfolio, in Appendix 2. Our previous experience working with Bury Council's planning department has been positive, and we are proceeding with this application in good faith, as it aligns closely with past successful developments.

However, we have encountered challenges in the planning process, particularly with regard to the financial implications of extended timelines, multiple submissions, and potential appeals. Given that we have already acquired the property, we are concerned about the commercial viability of a prolonged planning process.

We are mindful of the concerns and misconceptions that often surround HMOs and we are committed to maintaining the highest standards in all of our developments. Each bedroom will feature en-suite bathrooms and residents will have access to additional cleaning services. We have also employed a full-time property manager to ensure that the premises are well-maintained and that residents are supported.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss our proposal, share the management plan, and outline the benefits this development will bring to the local community. An overview of the scheme has been provided within this document, and we look forward to your response.



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Who we are

We are existing, highly experienced landlords with a history in Bury, Liverpool and Durham. Reena and Owen joined forces in 2023 with the goal of creating quality and affordable accommodation for tenants in Bury (biodata and credentials in appendix). Owen has been living in Manchester for quite a while, and, together, we are committed to contributing to the community and the town centre in Bury, Liverpool and Durham. We recognise not only the need for quality and affordable accommodation, but also for more mindful, good landlords who have the interest of local communities at heart.

Our project will bring investment to the town centre, accommodating 15 young professionals (across the 2 co-living HMOs) with economic clout and benefit to the local businesses on Walmersley Road and the surrounding neighbourhood.

This development will expand into the local community as we form partnerships with local small businesses to provide extra value and amenities for our residents.

Please see attached the following documents for your review:

- Floorplans
- Management proposal
- Example interiors pack

Key points about this project

- We are mindful and respectful developers who want to include you in the discussion for this application.
- As a councillor, we appreciate that you might have invaluable insight into how this property could benefit the community.
- We aim to get community involvement and include any feedback in our submission or discussions with the planning department.
- We would love to meet you at the property and show our plans as part of an open day, inviting the community to participate.



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Plans for the project

This project, which will provide accommodation for 15 young professionals across the 2 co-living HMOs, provides amenities way above the local and national standards.

It features:

- Double-size en-suite rooms averaging 15.86 sqm (excluding en-suites) for single-occupancy.
- A combined 94.2 sqm of communal space across the 2 co-living HMOs across 3 rooms (living area, kitchen/diner and co-working space).
- Way-above-average amenities that allow harmonious living with a good balance of their own facilities (to enable enough comfort and privacy) and shared facilities (to foster connection and promote good mental health, especially post-pandemic).
- A thorough management plan based on years of experience that includes financial incentives and implications for residents to help with waste management.

The live planning application is accessible on Bury Council's planning portal using this link: <https://planning.bury.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal= BURY DCAPR 6227 0>

Case reference: 71023 | Part change of use of former showroom/laundrette and 1no. flat (Use Class E/Sui Generis/Class C3) to form 1no. 7-bedroom (single occupancy) HMO (Sui Generis) and 1no. 8 Bedroom (single occupancy) HMO (Sui Generis) with associated parking and refuse storage and external alterations

How you can help

We appreciate we all lead busy lives, so we have a couple of options for you to choose from - feel free to opt for one or both:

- 1) Arrange a phone call and come to visit our project open day at 1-5 Porter Street, Bury, BL9 5DZ. (day and time in September/early October TBC upon expressions of interest).**

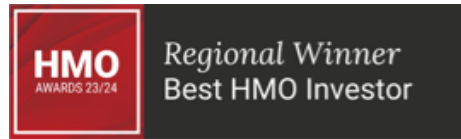
We would love to share the vision and plans for the project, and welcome input in the form of feedback on the current plan and ideas on how this scheme could benefit the community.

- 2) Respond to us by email to arrange a meeting in person or online.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Warm wishes, Owen Small



Appendix 1 – Our Background



North West Best HMO Investor of the Year - The HMO Awards 2023/24
<https://hmoawards.com/>

Owen and Reena are both seasoned property developers who entered into a partnership in 2023 to form Sonalight Living Ltd.

Our goal is to create shared living spaces for rental to serve professional tenants in the UK rental market who are looking for high quality and affordable housing.

Building community is one of our core values and our co-living properties allow housemates to have an amazing living experience with high quality space, design and experience.

We want to bring investment to Bury to drive economic growth, enhance the local economy, and provide significant benefits to businesses on Walmersley Road and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Below is a summary of Owen and Reena's professional background:



Owen is a highly qualified Quantity Surveyor and Construction Professional with over a decade of experience in the construction industry, working with one of the UK's leading Tier 1 contractors.

Since 2012, he has contributed to some of the country's largest and most complex construction and infrastructure projects, including the £900m+ HS2 Curzon Street Enabling Works, the £500m+ Manchester Airport Transformation Programme (Terminal 2 Extension), and the £600m+ New Everton Football Stadium.

In 2016, Owen transitioned into property investment, completing the 24-month Advanced Training Program under the mentorship of Fielding Financial and the HMO Platform, earning his AQA Certified Qualifications. His current property portfolio spans the North West and North East of England.

With a deep understanding of construction processes and hands-on

site experience, Owen expertly manages the design and construction phases of projects, ensuring clear and effective communication between investors and construction professionals to deliver successful outcomes.



Reena is an award-winning property investor and qualified Chartered Accountant with extensive experience in auditing property companies across the UK, Europe, and Africa during her long-standing career at a Big Four accountancy firm.

Transitioning into professional property investment in 2020, Reena quickly made her mark, drawing on her deep financial expertise to excel in the industry.

Reena was recently named the **North West Best HMO Investor of the Year at the HMO Awards 2023/24** and was a **finalist at the Property Investors Awards 2023** for her successful 8-bed co-living project in Bury.

Her ability to critically analyse and validate costs, coupled with her strong relationships with agents, architects, and vendors, has been instrumental in driving her success. With a sharp eye for interior design, she ensures that tenant experience remains at the heart of every project, combining financial acumen with design excellence.



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Appendix 2 – Previous High Quality HMO project in Bury

The purpose of this appendix is to provide an example of the coliving properties that we aim to create for the 2 HMOs in Porter Street. This property is part of our property portfolio located on Walmersley Road, Bury. It is spacious 8-bed licenced HMO which has been tenanted by professional tenants for the last two years. This property has earned industry recognition for its design, quality and tenant experience by winning the HMO awards 2023/24 and was amongst the finalists at the Property Investors Award 2023.

Sustainable approach:

Our design was centred around the tenants' experience and how they use different parts of the property throughout their day. From the outset, we had identified our target tenant as professionals who were looking for quality accommodation with 'work from home' facilities. We therefore created dedicated personal spaces to promote well-being and living spaces to encourage and nurture community, incorporating several communal areas comprising:

- large kitchen/diner where all the housemates can socialise and eat together,
- a cinema room for relaxing,
- a coffee snug for a chat,
- a dedicated co-working space for focus when working from home.

Space:

All bedrooms in this co-living home are spacious ranging in size from 14 – 24 sqm with ensembles. They are fully furnished, providing ample storage space and desk space for working from home (in addition to the dedicated co-working space). The design of the personal and living spaces make use of calming tones in the bedrooms with harmonious wallpapers/murals and uplifting colour schemes in the living areas.

Experience:

All tenants receive welcome gifts (tea selection from Bird and Blend) and a giftbox of toiletries) and we organise monthly pizza/games nights.

This co-living home is professionally managed by the HMO Guys, an award-winning co-living property manager. They use 'Arthur' for tenant selection, onboarding and ongoing communication. The system includes a portal where tenants can speak directly with an engineer to fix any maintenance issues 24/7 at the push of a button. There is a 12-month schedule to ensure potential issues are fixed before they break. Further details are included in the management proposal document.



Internal photos of our previous high quality 8-bed licenced HMO in Bury – Large Double Bedrooms, Expansive Kitchen/Dining room, Full En-Suite bathrooms, Cinema room and Communal breakout space:



Floor plans (Basement to 2nd floor) of our previous high quality 8-bed licenced HMO in Bury:

