



Design and Access Statement

217 Tottington Road, Bury

Prepared in support of a **full planning application** for the refurbishment and change of use of a vacant former Laboratory building to provide office accommodation.

1. Introduction

The application site is located at **217 Tottington Road, Bury**, occupying a prominent corner position at the junction with **Stewart Street**. The site comprises a single-storey brick-built building originally constructed as a laboratory associated with **Smethurst's Mill**. The building has been in the ownership of the applicant for approximately ten years.



View of building from Stewart Street/Tottington Road junction.

The premises are currently used for the storage of vehicle parts in association with the neighbouring business, **Bury Motor Services**. This existing storage use will cease upon the implementation of the proposed development, subject to the granting of planning permission. To the rear of the building is an area of hard-standing that has historically been used as a service yard and vehicle storage area.

This application seeks planning permission for the refurbishment of the existing building and a change of use to provide small-scale flexible office accommodation. The proposal supports Bury Council's objectives to encourage the reuse of previously developed land, improve the quality of the built environment, and support sustainable employment uses in accessible locations.

2. Site Context and Surroundings

The site is situated within an established **mixed-use area**. Surrounding uses include residential properties, car sales premises, vehicle repair workshops, and other commercial activities. This varied character reflects the historic and ongoing employment function of the area.

The site occupies a sustainable location on **Tottington Road**, which benefits from regular public transport services connecting Tottington, Bury town centre, and Bolton. The site is therefore well suited to small-scale commercial and community uses that serve the local area.

To the rear of the building is an area of hardstanding that has historically functioned as a service yard and vehicle storage area. This use will also cease upon the granting of planning permission.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal involves the refurbishment and internal subdivision of the existing building to provide small-scale flexible office accommodation. The attic floor will be retained by Bury Motor Services.

The internal layout has been designed to provide a high degree of flexibility to support future occupier demand and the long-term viability of the building. Whilst the application seeks permission for a **single office use**, a flexible internal approach is proposed to accommodate future lettings. The building will be subdivided to provide up to four office units, which may be occupied by between one and four tenants, without altering the overall nature of the approved use.

The scheme has been revised in response to pre-application advice to ensure that the building operates as a single use, rather than accommodating multiple potential uses. This approach provides clarity in relation to the nature of the development and ensures that the use of the building can be appropriately controlled through the planning process, including by the imposition of conditions if considered necessary.

The indicative unit schedule is as follows:

- **Unit 1:** Ancillary storage (associated with office use) – 25 m²
- **Unit 2:** Office – 50 m²
- **Unit 3:** Office – 33 m²
- **Unit 4:** Office – 43 m²

The proposed units are intended to meet identified local demand for small-scale office accommodation suitable for individual businesses or shared occupation. The flexibility of the internal arrangement allows units to be combined if required, ensuring adaptability over time while remaining within the scope of the approved office use.

4. Design and Appearance

The building is an attractive brick structure with architectural detailing including **stone lintels and quoins** and **brick dentil** at eaves level. While the building is currently in a tired state of repair, it retains character and contributes positively to the local streetscape.



View of rear elevation

The design approach prioritises **retention and enhancement** of the existing building, consistent with Bury Council's objectives to protect local character and promote sustainable development. The proposed refurbishment will significantly improve the appearance and condition of the building and secure its long-term use.

Existing window frames are later, unsympathetic replacements and will be removed. New windows will be installed that are appropriately proportioned and designed to reflect the character and period of the original building, improving the quality of the elevations.

Overall, the proposals will result in a substantial visual enhancement to this prominent corner site.

5. Planning Considerations

There is no relevant planning history associated with the application site. The building has been used for storage purposes in association with Bury Motor Services for approximately ten years.

The proposed change of use and refurbishment are appropriate within the context of the surrounding mixed-use area. The scale and nature of the proposed uses are modest and compatible with neighbouring residential and commercial properties.

The development supports Bury Council's economic objectives by providing flexible accommodation for small businesses and community uses, contributing to local activity and employment without resulting in unacceptable impacts on amenity, traffic, or highway safety.

6. Planning Policy Context



View of hardstanding

The application has been prepared in accordance with the **statutory development plan** and relevant national and local planning policy.

The statutory development plan for the site includes the **Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (Pfe)**, adopted in March 2024, which now forms part of the development plan for Bury. Due regard has also been had to the direction of the **emerging Bury Local Plan**, which, while not yet adopted, provides an indication of the Council's evolving policy objectives.

The proposal aligns with the overarching principles of the Places for Everyone plan, which support the **efficient use of previously developed land**, the **reuse and adaptation of existing buildings**, and the delivery of **high-quality, well-designed development** in sustainable locations.

In particular, the proposals respond positively to **Policy JP-G8 (A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity)**. While the site is previously developed and of limited existing ecological value, the scheme incorporates landscaping improvements and **native species planting** to ensure biodiversity is maintained and enhanced where practicable. This approach is proportionate to the scale of development and is intended to be **biodiversity neutral or better**, consistent with the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain.

The development also supports local economic objectives by providing **flexible commercial and community accommodation** suitable for small businesses and local uses, within an established mixed-use area and a location well served by public transport. This approach is consistent with the strategic aims of both the Places for Everyone plan and the emerging Bury Local Plan, which encourage sustainable economic growth and the reuse of existing buildings within urban areas.

Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant development plan policies and the direction of emerging local policy.

7. Access and Movement

Although the site address is 217 Tottington Road, the principal elevation addresses **Stewart Street**.

Vehicular access is currently taken from Stewart Street, and it is proposed that this existing access arrangement is retained.

The rear hard-standing area has historically been used for vehicle storage associated with the neighbouring garage. **This use will cease subject to the granting of planning permission**, and the area will thereafter serve the proposed development, including on-site parking.

A number of pedestrian access points exist from Stewart Street and from the rear of the site, some of which are currently blocked. These will be rationalised and reinstated or retained as appropriate to provide safe and convenient access for all users.

The site is well served by public transport, with frequent bus services along Tottington Road, supporting sustainable travel choices in accordance with local and national planning policy.

8. Landscaping, Biodiversity and External Areas

The site has historically been in commercial use and is currently almost entirely hard-surfaced. While a proportion of the hard-standing is required to accommodate vehicle parking, the proposals include the introduction of landscaped areas to soften the visual appearance of the site.

Landscaping will be enhanced through the **planting of native species**, contributing to local character, improving visual amenity, and supporting local biodiversity.

The application site comprises previously developed land with limited existing ecological value. In accordance with the principles of **Biodiversity Net Gain**, and acknowledging the small scale and nature of the development, the proposals seek to ensure that biodiversity is **maintained and enhanced where practicable**, without resulting in ecological harm. The landscaping strategy includes native planting to improve habitat value, support pollinators, and contribute positively to local biodiversity. Taken together, the proposals are intended to be **biodiversity neutral or better**, proportionate to the scale of development, and consistent with local and national planning policy.

9. Conclusion

The proposed development represents a **sustainable and policy-compliant reuse** of an existing building within a well-established mixed-use area.

The refurbishment will significantly improve the condition and appearance of a prominent corner building, enhance the local street scene, and provide flexible commercial and community accommodation that responds to local demand.

The proposal accords with the **Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan**, the direction of the **emerging Bury Local Plan**, and Bury Council's objectives for economic development, high-quality design, biodiversity enhancement, and the effective use of previously developed land. It is therefore considered that the development is acceptable in planning terms and that **planning permission should be granted**.

