

Planning, Heritage & Design Statement

44–48 Bolton Street, Ramsbottom, BL0 9HX

1 Executive Summary

This statement supports a full planning application for external and alterations to 44–48 Bolton Street, a nineteenth-century commercial building within the Ramsbottom Conservation Area.

This application seeks planning permission solely for external alterations to facilitate the continued lawful occupation of the building within Use Class E. No change of use is proposed, no additional floorspace is created, and no intensification beyond the established use is sought.

The proposed works are limited to façade alterations, including the reinstatement of historic openings, the introduction of conservation rooflights, replacement of inappropriate modern windows with heritage timber units, and the provision of a new rear access door. These works are required to address longstanding issues of inadequate natural light and access, which have prevented the viable use of the upper floors.

Internal subdivision, spatial separation and reconfiguration within the building all fall within permitted development rights, as they occur within the same lawful use class (Class E), and do not require planning permission.

Internal layouts are shown on the submitted drawings **for illustrative purposes only**, at the request of officers, to demonstrate how the proposed external alterations will facilitate the continued viable use of the building. The layouts have been designed to accommodate the current commercial use and to allow flexibility for potential future uses without the need for further external alteration.

The proposal will return a long-vacant heritage property to active commercial use following the closure of *Isherwood's* in Q1 2023. More than two years of marketing confirm that poor natural light and limited access have prevented reoccupation.

Proposals

- New rear access door within recessed elevation.
- Reinstatement of historic window openings previously blocked.
- Seven flush conservation-style rooflights (three front slope, four rear slope).
- Retention of Class E commercial use (likely office style over retail).
- Provision of internal cycle and waste storage.
- Replacement of door to waste and cycle area

This is a heritage-led resubmission, prepared after pre-application advice (Ref 03074/E) and addressing all issues raised in refusal Ref 69820 (decided 14 September 2023) and withdrawal Ref 69955 (September 2023).

2 Site Context & Heritage Significance

44–48 Bolton Street forms part of a continuous terrace of nineteenth-century stone-built commercial buildings, defining Ramsbottom’s historic centre.

Its triple-fronted width and traditional materials – natural stone, Welsh slate, and timber joinery – reflect the character described in the *Ramsbottom Conservation Area Management Plan (RCAMP 2007, page 7)*.

The site operated as Isherwoods Furniture for decades as once Class E retail unit over 3 floors. Following the closure of the business in early 2023 and acquisition by the applicant the site sat empty until 2025. The reasons cited by numerous prospective tenants for the site were due to refused planning applications, access issues and lack of natural light specifically to the upper floors and the rear of the building. Following two new retail users taking up a lease for the ground floor and the creation of two spaces to accommodate them the uppers remain vacant since early 2023. The building’s full use is vital to prevent deterioration of the historic fabric and sustain town-centre vitality.

3 Planning History

Reference	Date	Description	Outcome
69820	14 Sep 2023	External alterations incl. new openings and rooflights	<i>Refused</i> – rooflight proliferation / heritage impact
69955	Sep 2023	Change of use (Class E retail → Class E office) dependent on 69820	<i>Withdrawn</i> – following refusal of 69820
03074/E	Apr 2025	Pre-application advice on revised scheme	<i>Supportive</i> – heritage justification / conservation rooflights

This is the first fully design-led resubmission responding comprehensively to all previous advice.

4 Description of Proposed Development

- New Rear Access Door – recessed in rear elevation; improves servicing / egress; visually unobtrusive and reversible. Required for access to upper floors.
- Replacement of existing rear door to waste / cycle storage area as shown on A007-B_EXISTING+PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
- Reinstatement of Historic Openings – reopening blocked windows restores symmetry and daylight.
- New and Replacement Windows – Installation of new and replacement heritage-style painted timber casement windows to upper floors, featuring slimline double glazing (12 mm overall). Windows will be finished in heritage off-white (RAL 9001) with black ironmongery, maintaining traditional proportions within the existing stone reveals.

- Rooflights – Seven (7) flush conservation-type units (three front, four rear), aligned with window bays below and reduced from earlier scheme. Required for natural light to the top floor.
- Internal Layout – ground floor: two Class E retail units (existing); upper floors: five suites (Class E likely office). For reference only to show reason for façade changes not subject to planning.
- Cycle / Waste Storage for upper floors – internal, enclosed, to current standards. Existing space so is noted for context only. Access and location are via the door to the buildings rear as shown on A007-B_EXISTING+PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

Drawings Schedule

A001-B_LOCATION+SITE PLAN

A001-D_EXISTING PLANS

A006-B_PROPOSED PLANS - COMMERCIAL

A007-B_EXISTING+PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

A008_ROOFLIGHT DETAIL

A009_DOOR+WINDOW SCHEDULE

A010_WINDOW SECTION DETAILS

by Grant Erskine Architects Ltd illustrate the scheme.

5 Materials & Construction Methods

Element	Specification
Walls	Existing coursed natural stone retained; repairs in matching stone using lime mortar (NHL 3.5); no cement mortar.
Roof Covering	Existing natural Welsh slate retained; reclaimed slates for repairs; ridge tiles to match.
Rooflights	Flush-fitting conservation type (e.g. Velux GGL Conservation or equivalent); black powder-coated metal frames; MK06 (780 × 1180 mm); installed within rafter depth to avoid projection. See A009_DOOR+WINDOW SCHEDULE and A008_ROOFLIGHT DETAIL
ALL Windows	Timber-framed casements with 12 mm slimline double glazing; painted finish to match existing joinery. Heritage off-white (RAL 9001) finish; black ironmongery; installed within existing stone reveals; traditional casement profile. See A009_DOOR+WINDOW SCHEDULE and A010_WINDOW SECTION DETAILS
NEW Rear Door	Painted single leaf timber panel door with heritage ironmongery set in existing stone reveal. . See A009_DOOR+WINDOW SCHEDULE
Masonry Repairs	Localised indents in matching stone; lime-based repointing only. (Patching on installation)
REPLACEMENT Rear Door	Painted timber, framed and ledged, heritage off-black (RAL 9005), within existing stone reveal. . See A009_DOOR+WINDOW SCHEDULE

6 Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Paragraph 197 – assess significance of heritage assets and proposal impact.
- Paragraph 199 – give great weight to conservation.
- Paragraph 202 – balance any “less than substantial harm” against public benefits.
- Paragraph 208 – support enhancement through sensitive development.

Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

- Policy EN2/1 – Character of Conservation Areas: development that adversely affects character or appearance will not be permitted.
- Policy EN2/2 – Conservation Area Control: special attention must be given to preserving or enhancing character and appearance.

Ramsbottom Conservation Area Management Plan (2007)

Relevant sections: 5.4 (page 13), 5.5 (page 14), 5.6 (pages 62–63), and Policy 7 (pages 72–73). Direct quotations and interpretations follow.

7 RCAMP Extracts and Interpretation

Character and Appearance (page 7)

“The special character of Ramsbottom lies in the cohesive groups of nineteenth-century stone-built commercial and residential buildings, their slate roofs, traditional shopfronts and boundary walls, all set within the valley landscape of the Irwell.”

Interpretation: Retention of stone façades and slate roofing together with reinstated historic openings strengthens the architectural coherence of the terrace.

Commercial Buildings (section 5.4, page 13)

“Many commercial properties within the conservation area have under-used or vacant upper floors. Their sensitive reuse for office or residential purposes should be encouraged to maintain vitality and ensure long-term maintenance of the building fabric.”

Interpretation: Reusing upper floors for Class E office use meets this objective, supporting economic vitality and ongoing maintenance.

Enhancement and Management (section 5.5, page 14)

“Opportunities should be sought to reinstate lost architectural features, repair traditional materials, and encourage appropriate uses that secure the future of historic buildings.”

Interpretation: Reinstating blocked windows and repairing stonework with lime mortar deliver enhancement and ensure long-term conservation.

Chimneys, Roofs, Roof-lights and Rainwater Goods (section 5.6, pages 62–63)

“Chimney stacks have largely been retained... Roof-lights are common in residential areas... Standard roof-lights stand proud of the roof finish; these, unlike conservation-style roof-lights, can be noticeable, especially on front-facing or visible roof pitches.”

Interpretation: Seven flush conservation-style rooflights are proposed, evenly spaced and aligned with fenestration below. Their reduced number and placement accord with officer feedback and RCAMP guidance to avoid roofscape dominance.

Policy 7 – Planning and Conservation Area Consent Applications (pages 72–73)

“Proposals should respond to the surrounding development in terms of scale, height, massing, detail and materials. All proposals should protect or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.”

Interpretation: Scale, mass and ridge height remain unchanged; materials match existing. The design therefore protects and enhances the area’s character.

8 Heritage Impact Assessment

Intervention	Impact	Assessment
Rear Access Door	Neutral	Recessed and obscured; improves function without visual harm.
Reinstated Openings	Positive	Restores historic design rhythm and increases natural light.
Rooflights	Minor / Neutral	Flush conservation units aligned with bays; reduced from previous scheme.
Upper-Floor Reuse	Positive	Secures viable use consistent with RCAMP section 5.4.

Cumulative Impact: Taken together, the interventions retain form and scale and deliver a net heritage benefit through reinstatement and reuse.

9 Design and Access Considerations

- Access: Rear door provides secondary servicing and fire egress for upper floors; painted timber construction with heritage ironmongery.
- Sustainability: Reuse of existing fabric reduces embodied carbon.
- Daylight: Rooflights and reopened windows provide functional illumination without visual intrusion.
- Materials: Natural stone, slate and timber throughout; no uPVC or cementitious materials.
- Reversibility: All alterations reversible without loss of historic fabric.
- Scale and Massing: No change to height or roof form.
- Parking and highway matters do not form part of the development for which planning permission is sought. The proposal does not introduce a change of use, additional floorspace or intensification beyond the established Class E use.

10 Planning Balance and Conclusion

Under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention must be paid to preserving or enhancing the area's character or appearance.

This proposal meets that statutory duty and accords with:

- NPPF (2023) paragraphs 197, 199, 202 and 208;
- Bury UDP Policies EN2/1 and EN2/2; and
- RCAMP (2007) sections 5.4 to 5.6 (pages 13–14 and 62–63) and Policy 7 (pages 72–73).

Planning Balance

- Resolves previous refusal (69820) and withdrawal (69955) through heritage-led design.
- Significant reduction in rooflights and significant design changes to address officer concerns in refusal (69820) with support for these changes in preapp 03074/E
- Reinstates lost architectural features and reduces rooflight visual impact.
- Reuses approximately 250 m² of vacant floorspace, creating employment and supporting town-centre vitality.
- Delivers public benefit that clearly outweighs any minor visual change under NPPF paragraph 202.

Conclusion: The proposal is heritage-led, technically robust and policy-compliant. It will secure the long-term use of a vacant heritage asset while preserving and enhancing the special character of the Ramsbottom Conservation Area.

Planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.

11. Additional Points Raised at Validation

Refuse and Cycle Storage

Refuse and storage for the existing ground-floor commercial uses is accommodated within the curtilage of their usable space. They have private arrangements for the disposal. There is no material affect on this application. Regarding the five commercial spaces to the upper floors. The dedicated waste storage and cycle storage unit is shown on drawing A007-B_EXISTING+PROPOSED ELEVATIONS. No external refuse storage or enclosures are proposed.

The submitted plans identify the existing internal storage arrangement to demonstrate how waste management will continue to be accommodated for the ongoing Class E use of the building. The proposal does not introduce any new use, additional floorspace or intensification beyond the lawful baseline.

Parking, Servicing and Highway Considerations

Parking and highway matters do not form part of the development for which planning permission is sought. However, for completeness, it is noted that the proposal does not introduce a change of use, additional floorspace or intensification beyond the established Class E use of the building.

The site is located within Ramsbottom town centre, where SPD11: Parking Standards in Bury recognises that reduced or nil on-site parking provision is appropriate due to accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.

Servicing, deliveries and waste collections will continue to take place from the established rear service lane. As the proposal facilitates continued use rather than intensification, it does not give rise to increased parking demand or highway safety impacts beyond the existing lawful situation.

Places for Everyone (PfE) – Energy and Digital Connectivity

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document, adopted on 21 March 2024, forms part of the statutory development plan for Bury. The proposal comprises external alterations only, with no change of use, no new floorspace and no new dwellings. In this context, Policy JP-S2 (Carbon and Energy) is addressed proportionately through the reuse of the existing building fabric, improved thermal performance arising from replacement windows and rooflights, and compliance with the 2022 Building Regulations Part L where applicable. The requirements for EV charging under Part S do not apply. In respect of Policy JP-C2 (Digital Connectivity), the development will facilitate access to full-fibre broadband connections, with no identified technical or viability constraints. The proposal is therefore compliant with the relevant PfE policies insofar as they apply to this form of development.

Appendices

1. Drawings as per Drawings Schedule (Grant Erskine Architects Ltd separate document)
2. Aerial Roofscape Images (Front & Rear images contained in this document)
3. Agent Letter – Commercial Viability & Lighting Evidence

Appendix 2 – Overhead Context Images (Front & Rear Roofscape)

Front roofscape with property redlined. Also denotes other in row properties with roof features.



Rear roofscape with property redlined. Shows obscured rear elevated roofline containing existing rooflights, and other row properties with roof features.



Appendix 3. Agent Responses.

44 - 48 Bolton St, Ramsbottom, BL0 9HX



Stuart Pearson <stuart.pearson@pearsonferrier.co.uk>
To: Phil Bygrave

Reply Reply All Forward

Wed 09/07/2025 10:09

You replied to this message on 09/07/2025 12:25.

Hi Phil

As you know we have been marketing the first and second floors for a couple of years now. The feedback in general from viewers and potential tenants has been that the unit in its current layout is too big, the lack of natural light has also been a large stumbling block.

In order to let the properties my advice would be to divide it into smaller units with more natural light. There is good demand for this sort of unit, generally speaking it is from businesses that are customer facing but are usually by appointment so Aesthetics, Beauty, Tutoring, Mortgage Advisors, Insurance Brokers, Counselling etc.

I would be confident of finding quality tenants in a reasonable timescale.

If I can be of any further help please let me know.

Regards

Stuart



Stuart Pearson
Commercial

E: stuart.pearson@pearsonferrier.co.uk

W: pearsonferrier.co.uk

435-437 Walmsley Road, Bury BL9 5EU



Pearson Ferrier (Salford) Ltd. 435-437 Walmsley Road, Bury BL9 5EU

QUOTE

“As you know we have been marketing the first and second floors for a couple of years now. The feedback in general from viewers and potential tenants has been that the unit in its current layout is too big, the lack of natural light has also been a large stumbling block.

In order to let the properties my advice would be to divide it into smaller units with more natural light. There is good demand for this sort of unit, generally speaking it is from businesses that are customer facing but are usually by appointment so Aesthetics, Beauty, Tutoring, Mortgage Advisors, Insurance Brokers, Counselling etc.

I would be confident of finding quality tenants in a reasonable timescale.

If I can be of any further help please let me know.”