

Design, Access and Planning Statement

Change of Use from Funeral Directors to 4 bedroom HMO (C4)



Site Location:	6 Bethel Street, Rochdale, OL10 1HU
Date:	07/05/2025
Planning Authority:	Rochdale Borough Council

Introduction

Homz (**The agent**) has been instructed by Thomas Lloyd (**The applicant**) to prepare and submit a planning application to Rochdale Borough Council (**the Planning Authority**) for the Change of Use from Funeral Directors to a 4 bedroom HMO (C4) (**The application**) at 28 Brook Hey Drive, Liverpool, L33 9TB (**the Site Location**). In support of this application, the following Design and Access Statement is submitted to demonstrate the need for the change of use and evaluate its accordance with national and local policies.

Site Description

The application relates to 6 Bethel Street, a two storey building within the Heywood Town Centre, which has previously been used as a chapel of rest for the adjacent funeral directors; however the building is now currently vacant.

Surrounding land uses are mixed, with funeral directors and associated car parking to the south with a number of newly constructed dwellings beyond this. There is also a Methodist church to the south west and a variety of commercial premises to the north. The site does not lie in an area designated under the current local development plan, including a Conservation Area or Flood Zone.

Planning History

Change of use from funeral directors to 4 no. bedroom House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Use Class C4 including installation of single window to first floor rear elevation and reinstatement of ground floor side window together with erection of 1.5m high boundary fencing - Resubmission of 18/01439/FUL

6 Bethel Street Heywood OL10 1HU

Ref. No: 19/00453/FUL | Received: Thu 18 Apr 2019 | Validated: Thu 18 Apr 2019 | Status: Decided

Change of use from funeral directors to 7 no. bedroom House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Use Class C4 including installation of single window to first floor rear elevation and reinstatement of ground floor side window together with erection of 1.5m high boundary fencing

6 Bethel Street Heywood OL10 1HU

Ref. No: 18/01439/FUL | Received: Fri 21 Dec 2018 | Validated: Mon 21 Jan 2019 | Status: Unknown

Change of use of premises from ladies fitness centre (use class D2) to funeral directors (use class A1) including formation of access ramp, installation of roller shutter door in east facing elevation and formation of additional doorway in south facing elevation of building

Former Fitness Connection 8-10 Bethel Street Heywood Lancashire OL10 1HU

Ref. No: 12/55611/FUL | Received: Fri 11 May 2012 | Validated: Wed 30 May 2012 | Status: Decided

Change Of Use From Gymnasium To Funeral Directors Including Chapel Of Rest

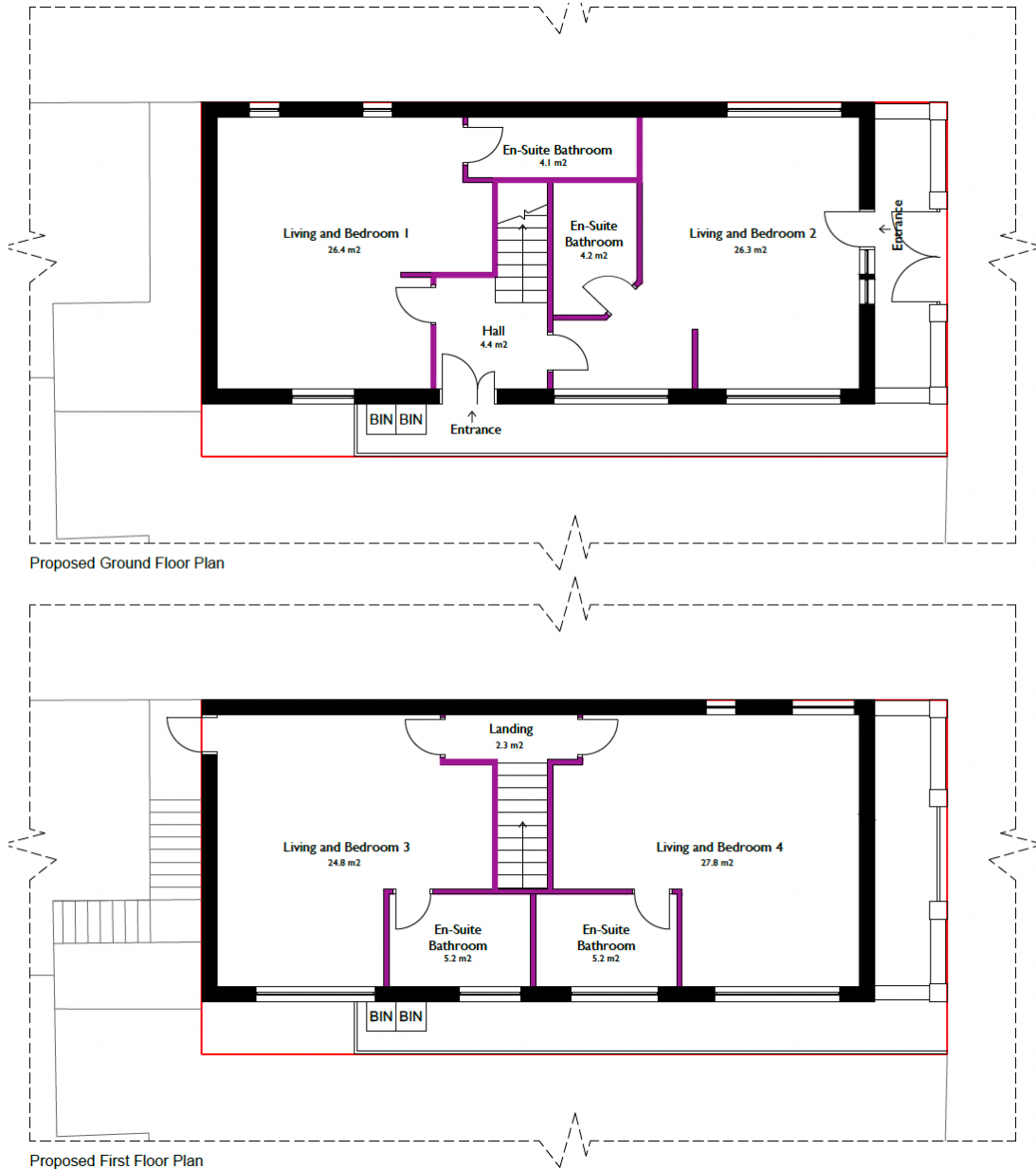
6, Bethel Street, Heywood, Lancashire, OL10 1HU

Ref. No: 03/D41813 | Received: Mon 16 Jun 2003 | Validated: Tue 17 Jun 2003 | Status: Unknown

Proposed Development

The proposed development relates in internal change of use from an existing Funeral Directors to create a 4 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The kitchen facility on the first floor will be shared, making the property a HMO.

It is noted as per the planning history above that a similar planning application for a change of use to a HMO has been approved, but not implemented and so this permission has expired.



Relevant Planning Policy Considerations

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision making
- Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- Section 8 – Promoting healthy communities
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

- SO1 Delivering a more prosperous economy
- E1 Establishing thriving town, district and local centres
- SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities
- C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
- C3 Delivering the right type of housing
- SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place
- P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 Improving design of new development
- SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
- T2 Improving accessibility
- DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

A number of policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan have been saved following the adoption of the Core Strategy. The following saved policies are relevant:

- G/D/1 Defined Urban Area
- G/S/1 Hierarchy and Role of Centres

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (June 2016).

Material Considerations

The planning assessment will cover the following issues:

- Principle of the Development
- Quality of Accommodation
- Impacts to Neighbouring Amenity
- Sustainable Transport
- Waste Management

Principle of the Development

At the national level, the NPPF recognises the need for new housing and for the housing supply to meet the needs of present and future generations and seeks to direct new development to the most sustainable locations.

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan was adopted June 2006 and includes policy H/12 on Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Proposals for the sub-division of dwellings into self-contained flats or houses in multiple occupation, will be required to comply with the following criteria:

- a) The proposal should not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the surrounding area and the amenity of residents in any neighbouring properties by reason of noise, visual intrusion or loss of privacy;
- b) The proposal should provide adequate outdoor amenity and bin storage areas; and
- c) The proposal should make suitable, safe and convenient arrangements for access, parking and servicing

The intention for the residents, is and continues to be, to live in a shared facility which allows for more affordable housing options for renting whilst also a more economic, resourceful, and social living situation than if they were to rent larger self-contained flats/apartments individually.

Policy E1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy states that the Council will focus retail, leisure, cultural, office, residential and other development to promote the viability and vitality of all the Borough's town centres to maintain them as thriving and sustainable centres and the preferred shopping and leisure destinations. Specifically, the CS notes that centres have the potential to play an important role in providing new quality housing in sustainable locations.

Although the proposal would result in the loss of existing commercial floor space, the NPPF and Core Strategy are both clear that residential development within existing centres is to be encouraged, where it does not explicitly damage the viability and vitality of the centre or detract from the provision of other employment space. It should be noted that the property is currently vacant and the proposal would bring the property back into a viable use within this location. Given the location of the site in a well-established town centre, it is considered that the development would benefit from sustainable access to services and employment opportunities.

It is considered that the principle of development to use the property as a HMO within C4 Class and loss of commercial floor space is acceptable as the above is assessed in the

following subsections below and a change of use can be supported if these planning requirements are met.

Quality of Accommodation

The NPPF 2024 pays specific regard to design being of high quality. Chapter 12 discusses how good quality design is instrumental amongst development proposals. It states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy sets out a number of basic planning considerations that apply to all development.

The Nationally Described Space Standards 2015 states that 7.5sqm is the minimum for a single bedroom and 11.5sqm is the minimum for a double bedroom. All studio rooms are in excess of 24.8sqm and meet this requirement, with their own en-suite bathrooms. These are all served by adequate windows providing daylight/ sunlight, outlook and ventilation.

The property would require an HMO licence, which would be sought, due to its status as a property rented out to multiple tenants who are not part of the same household, a condition that legally necessitates such a license. This regulatory measure ensures that the property meets specific health and safety standards, providing adequate living conditions for all occupants. An HMO license is crucial for properties like this to ensure compliance with local housing regulations, which include fire safety protocols, adequate space and amenities, and proper maintenance. Additionally, the license ensures that the landlord or managing agent is a fit and proper person to manage the property, thereby protecting tenants' welfare. Given the property's location in a densely populated urban area, the license also helps in managing the impact on local services and infrastructure, preventing issues such as overcrowding and ensuring the neighbourhood remains a safe and pleasant environment for all residents.

The internal layout of the dwelling and amenities provided is considered to constitute high quality accommodation in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards 2015. As such, the change of use would provide an acceptable quality of accommodation for the future occupiers, in accordance with the local and national policy.

Impacts on neighbouring amenity

Policy G9 of the Core Strategy sets out that the Council will seek to reduce all forms of pollution by requiring that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution.

In light of the context of the surroundings of the site and the associated levels of general activity and noise, it is not considered that the change of use to a HMO with 4 bedrooms, would result in a further increase in activity levels, noise and disturbance associated with residential activities and comings and goings etc. to the extent that would unacceptably impact on the adjacent funeral directors or any other surrounding uses. R

Regarding the change of the use to a HMO, the comings and goings by vehicles and pedestrians would be similar to the residential occupation of adjoining/neighbouring dwelling, particularly for only 3 residents. Any noise and disturbance from the use is not likely to be materially different to that caused by the use of existing commercial units, and from vehicle trips, access and refuse collections and school directly opposite etc.

Therefore, it is considered that the noise that is generated, would blend into surrounding residential ambient noise and would not necessarily amplify the level of activities in the area.

As such, the scheme would have a neutral impact on residential amenity in general.

Sustainable Transport

The NPPF 2024 recognises that sustainable transport has an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also contributing to wider health objectives. In particular it offers encouragement to developments which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and those which reduce congestion.

The NPPF also outlines that developments which generate significant vehicle movements should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport options can be maximised. It is also expected that new development will not give rise to the creation conflicts between vehicular traffic and pedestrians. The NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highways safety.

The scheme provides no dedicated off-road parking for the facility and given the specific nature of the use it is considered less likely that all residents will own a vehicle. In addition, the Highways Authority has noted in the previous approval that the facility is adjacent to the Heywood Centre in a very sustainable location therefore will not require dedicated parking. A cycle stand will be provided, in accordance with full details to be provided.

The change of use therefore does conflict with the requirements of local or national policy with regards to transport.

Waste Management

The proposal would have dedicated internal and external storage space for dry recycling, food waste and residual waste to the front of the dwelling and it is assumed that these existing waste arrangements would be acceptable.

Conclusion

This report has highlighted that the change of use, subject to this application, is in accordance with the Council's planning policies and national planning policy.

For the above reasons the development is sustainable development and is also in accordance with national policy and guidance. Therefore, in the absence of any other material considerations to justify otherwise, it is respectfully requested that development be considered as acceptable in principle.

Should the Planning Authority request any further information in order to process this request, please contact **Homz** (hello@homz.uk) directly as the acting agent and we will be more than happy to deliver any additional information as and when required.