

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PLANNING APPLICATION (DECEMBER 2023) BY Mr STEVEN BUCKLEY

Conversion of first floor offices into two-bed self contained flat.

**with alterations to upper ground floor retail area
and lower ground store/workshop & part external
rendering (side and rear walls).**

at

**836-838 Manchester Road, Castleton,
ROCHDALE OL11 2SP**

The applicant has requested guidance from the local planning authority (in the way of formal 'pre-application advice' about a new application for consent to the proposals. The original planning application (21/00937/FUL, registered on 25th August 2021) was withdrawn at the suggestion of the planning officer because of the combined impact of the Covid epidemic lockdowns and the time that getting further guidance would take in these circumstances.

The 'pre-application advice' made a request for two specific pieces of supporting information which are now included with the application documents:

1. Noise Impact Assessment

The application documents include an impact assessment prepared by Clement Acoustics of Bury. The assessment finds that while the levels are all fine at the rear façade, they are slightly in excess of the Local Authority's desired levels on the front façade. However, given the context and site location (a busy road close to a railway and an important transport interchange where people are particularly likely to choose to live), these levels would appear to be acceptable.

2. Heritage Statement.

The application documents also include a heritage statement that was originally prepared in August 2021 but has now been updated to show how the proposals fully take account of the comments made by the conservation officer. In summary, 'enhancement' is as much an imperative in a Conservation Area as 'conservation' itself. The CA Appraisal makes clear that 'neglect and vacancy' as well as inappropriate shop fronts are the primary cause of degeneration within the area at present. Prevention will start by tackling neglect and vacancies 'at an early stage' and the proposals are specifically intended to do this. However, the proposals are unable to do anything about 'inappropriate shopfronts' because the subject property does not happen to be one of the ideal examples discussed in the CA Appraisal.

Accordingly, as the conservation officer says, the proposals do indeed make a material change to the conservation area, but for the better. The need to apply render to the rear and side elevations of the building is urgent remedial work that will have the added benefit of showing the building is maintained and cared-for and will reduce the likelihood of vacancies in a location opposite a key focus for investment, Castleton railway station.

Friday, 1 December 2023
