CIVITAS
Planning Limited

Change of Use of Former Offices to 18 bed HMO

Location: 1-3 Pitt Street, Heywood, OL10 1JP.

Supporting Planning Statement

Prepared by:

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1 Introduction

1.1 This applicant is made for a change of use at the above referenced property from its last known use as an Office to a House in Multiple Occupation of 18 Bedrooms.

2 Site Description and Proposal

2.1 The proposal is for a change of use from an Office Use to a House in Multiple Occupation for 18 Occupants.

2.2 The site is within close proximity to Heywood's centre, as well as being within walking distance to all services and amenities.

2.3 The part of the building subject to this change of use has been vacant

2.4 The site has the benefit of 18 formal parking spaces and ample space for cycle storage and bin storage to the rear of the building.

2.5 The proposal involves internal changes as shown on the associated drawings, there are no external changes proposed.

2.6 The takeaway at the ground floor will not be changed and will continue to be used by the Domino Pizza Chain.

3 Policy Context

3.1 The application site is within the main centre of Heywood. The principle of the proposal is therefore acceptable as it makes the most efficient and effective use of an existing building through an appropriate residential conversion. Policy E1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy (RCS) 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 RCS notes that centres have the potential to play an important role in providing new quality housing in sustainable locations.

3.2 Policy supports the provision of residential uses where it assists with regeneration and, if replacing existing commercial units, where there are high vacancy rates, this particular unit has been vacant for over 18 months.

3.3 Although the proposal would result in the loss of some 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.

3.4 Given the location of the site in a well-established local centre, on Pitt Street and within walking distance of Heywood Centre, it is considered that the development would benefit from sustainable access to services and employment opportunities. Therefore, the principle of the development would comply with the policies contained within the Core Strategy, the Unitary Development Plan and the NPPF and would make a valuable contribution to the supply of housing in the Borough.

3.5 In light of the context of the surroundings of the site and the associated levels of general activity and noise, and bearing in mind the previous use of the site, it is not considered that the change of use to a HMO, would result in significant further increase in activity levels, noise and disturbance associated with residential activities and comings and goings etc. to the extent that would unduly impact on the amenity of residents in the limited number of surrounding properties.

3.6 With regard to the living conditions of future occupiers of the property, it is noted that all units within the HMO would be provided with natural light and ventilation, with an outlook to the street or the rear yard area. Large communal areas/kitchens would be provided within the property, allowing for adequate internal provision of amenity space, whilst a kitchen and dining space would also be provided at each level. Each room would have its own WC and washing facilities. There is large yard area to the rear for bin and cycle storage away from public vantage points.

3.7 In summary, it is considered that the development would not have an undue adverse impact on the living conditions of the nearby residents. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Policies DM1 and G9 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, along with the relevant requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3.8 Policy P3 of the adopted Core Strategy requires all new developments, regardless of location in the borough, to adhere to high standards of design. Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy states that all development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area, in addition to requiring a number of other basic planning considerations. As previously stated, there are no external changes proposed and the fabric of the building will remain the same. There will be no detrimental impact to the standard of design in the area.

3.9 The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' requires that residential properties should include space for bins to be stored out of public view to avoid them

dominating residential streets. It is a requirement that bins are stored to the rear of the property away from the street scene and / or in a designated area that is well-designed, appropriately sited and screened. The rear yard area of the property does provide suitable space for the storage of bins which is considered to be adequate.

3.10 Policy T2 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that development that offers greater access for all forms of travel will assist the borough's continuous improvement to becoming more sustainable, healthier, greener and prosperous. Development and infrastructure proposal are required to satisfy the Council's accessibility hierarchy and in all circumstances, the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area will have priority, while providing reliable journey times for those travelling through.

3.11 The scheme provides 18 dedicated off-road parking spaces for the facility and cycle storage to the rear. The proposed HMO is central to Heywood and a short walk from access to amenities and public transport therefore no justification is needed for car parking at this location, furthermore, it would not generate a large volume of traffic. The refuse collection/storage from this location would is also clearly acceptable.

3.12 Furthermore, given the specific nature of the use, it is considered less likely that all residents will own a vehicle and therefore require dedicated parking.

3.13 It is considered that the level of traffic the development would generate would not create a significant negative impact upon the existing local highway network.

3.14 As such, there would be no adverse impact on the highway network and the application is as such acceptable and would accord with policies T2 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

3.15 The proposal, overall, represents a sustainable re-use of a vacant building for a residential purpose, within a recognised town centre. The proposal is therefore sustainable development, compliant with all relevant local and national planning policy/guidance.