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Proposed House in Multiple Occupation
6 Bethel Street, Heywood OL10 1HU

PLANNING STATEMENT

Introduction

The applicant purchased the building at auction and it is now advertised as being for sale or to let. The current permitted use is A1 retail as explained below. The building is suitable for a number of uses subject to planning permission but it has no dedicated parking spaces and very limited external space. Use as a house in multiple occupation (HMO) would not have a parking requirement or the need for private amenity space.

The Site and Its Situation

The property is a two storey, flat roofed building at the rear of Market Street, one of Heywood's main shopping streets. The yard immediately to the north of the building is in the ownership of a shop fronting Market Street. The building has two entrances, one from a small forecourt to Bethel Street at the front and the other from the side, facing a private car park in the ownership of 8-10 Bethel Street.

Internally, the building is divided into several rooms on the ground floor with one large room, small kitchen and wc on the first floor. The fire escape from the first floor at the rear is not in the applicant's ownership.

Planning History

On the opposite side of the street planning permission (15/01480/FUL) has been granted for a three storey block of 14 flats. It is not clear from the Council's website but there appears to be no on site car parking, although a condition does require two cycle spaces to be provided.

The first record on the Council website for 6 Bethel Street is a change of use from chapel of rest with self contained flat to gymnasium approved in March 1992 (92/D27818).

The building adjacent to number 6 (8 to 10 Bethel Street) obtained planning permission for change of use from an ironmongers to an extension to a gymnasium in June 1999 (99/D36549).

Number 6 Bethel Street was no longer used as a gym and planning permission (12/55611/FUL) was granted for the change of use to a funeral directors was granted in July 2012. This is the permitted use for the building. The door to Bethel Street still has the name of the undertakers, Kavanagh and Cotes.

When the gym at 8 to 10 Bethel Street ceased trading the building was purchased by Kavanagh and Cotes. They obtained planning permission for use of the building as a funeral directors in July 2003 (03/D41813). Alterations were made so that vehicles could access the building.

The whole of the parking area was retained for use in association with the funeral business. Number 6 Bethel Street is separated from the car park by a post and rail fence. The building, now the subject of the current planning application, became surplus to requirements and it was sold at auction to my client. It retains its planning permission for use as a funeral directors. This is an A1 retail use which would allow the building to be used as shop, showroom or hairdressers.

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework supports the granting of planning permission for sustainable development that is in accordance with the development plan. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to be positive rather than negative and to grant planning permissions which may otherwise be unacceptable with the use of conditions.

The NPPF (Chapter 5) requires LPAs to deliver a sufficient supply of homes for different groups in the community.

Paragraph 118a) states that planning policies and decisions should "promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing".

The property is just within the allocated Heywood Town Centre on the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan which was adopted in June 2006. It is not within the designated shopping area.

In relation to the application site the Town Centre boundary is the same in the Rochdale Core Strategy (October 2016). Policy 2.3 states that in Heywood "a greater variety of housing type and tenure is needed".

Policy C2 focuses on the regeneration and the delivery of new homes for sale and rent in Central Heywood (including the town centre) to widen housing choice in the area.

Justification for Approval

The Housing Act 2004 defines a "House in Multiple Occupation". The Council website sets out the space standards, facilities and amenities required to meet licensing requirements. The proposed layout is designed with these requirements in mind. The layout is constrained by existing window positions with no outlook from the windows on the north elevation. The layout is further constrained by structural walls on the ground floor.

All the proposed bedrooms have windows on the south elevation with an open outlook. There are three on the ground floor and four on the first floor with a bathroom, separate wc and kitchen to each floor. The two entrances/exits will be retained with the removal of a stud wall to allow either to be used by residents.

The only changes to the appearance of the building will be reinstating a window opening to the south elevation and part bricking up the door to the fire escape. Bedrooms to the first floor will have escape windows.

A bin store at the side of the building will be screened by a 1500mm high solid fence.

A lockable cycle rack will be provided at the front of the building.

The building has a permitted retail use. This would generate traffic and require service access and car parking which are not available on site. Any change of use other than a HMO would also be likely to generate traffic and may need additional amenity space which cannot be provided and would almost inevitably lead to a refusal of planning permission.

The proposed use is a sustainable form of development with all amenities within easy walking distance.

Additional residential accommodation will contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Local planning policies and national guidance support approval. There are no reasons why planning permission should not be granted.