



5 - 9 Ann Street, Rochdale, OL16 1QQ Change of Use to 8-bed HMO

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by Veritas Planning Ltd on behalf of the applicant for the change of use of 5 – 9 Ann Street, Rochdale, OL16 1QQ to an 8-bed House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis Use).
- 1.2 This statement provides a description of the application site and its surrounding, the relevant planning history of the site, an overview of the development plan framework and addresses the relevant planning issues.
- 1.3 It is concluded that the development proposal accords with the adopted development plan, and that the proposal can be supported.

2 Site and Proposal

- 2.1 The application site consists of a two-storey building, with a rendered finish to the front and rear, with the side elevation consisting of red brick. A yard is located to the rear of the property.
- 2.2 The site is located to the south of Rochdale Town Centre, just a short distance away from Rochdale Town Centre, in an area with a mix of residential and commercial uses. It is noted that No. 15 Ann Street, which directly adjoins the application site, is used as a HMO, and a community hostel is located opposite the site. Other HMOs are also located a short distance from the site.
- 2.3 The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor does the proposal relate to a Listed Building. The site is located in Flood Zone 1, which is the lowest risk of flooding.
- 2.4 The building is currently empty, having previously been used for food production for off-site catering, having been granted planning permission for this use in October 2021 (ref: 21/00302/FUL). Prior to this, it is understood that the property was vacant for some time and was approved for storage in 1998.
- 2.5 This application proposes the conversion of the building into an 8-bedroom HMO. The ground floor will consist of an entrance hall, generously sized kitchen/diner and separate living space. Taken together the kitchen/dining room and living room provide a shared amenity space of 34.8m². Each of the bedrooms will have a floorspace in excess of the 6.5m² minimum required by HMO licensing, with most bedrooms significantly exceeding this requirement. Additional space provided in the form of en-suite bathrooms, and each bedroom is provided natural light in the form of adequately sized windows. Bin storage and 10 x cycle spaces will be provided to the rear of the building.
- 2.6 Once completed, the building will be leased to Stepping Stone Projects (SSP). SSP provide a range of support services and accommodation to homeless and other vulnerable groups in the Rochdale area. SSP's aim is to help their customers develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to secure and maintain independent living.

- 2.7 SSP currently successfully operate the adjoining property at 11-15 Ann St, Rochdale, alongside a number of other facilities in the area. There is an existing SSP management team based in 11-15 Ann St which will also oversee and manage the support services and accommodation at 5-9 Ann St.

3 Planning Policy

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the above requirement relating to the determination of planning applications and also confirms that the NPPF must be taken into account as a material planning consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.3 The 'development plan' relating to the site consists of the following documents:
- Places for Everyone Plan;
 - Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy;
 - Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan;
 - Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan;
 - Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan.

Places for Everyone Plan

- 3.4 The following policies of the Places for Everyone Plan are considered relevant to this proposal.

Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development

- 3.5 As part of this policy, the Places for Everyone Plan states that development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts and utilise sustainable construction techniques.

Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises

- 3.6 Policy JP-J2 seeks to protect existing employment areas that are “important to maintaining a strong and diverse supply of sites” in the area.

Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Development

- 3.7 This policy sets an average housing requirement of 616 new dwellings per annum across the plan period.

- 3.8 The scale of the housing crisis facing Greater Manchester, and its wider impacts, are reflected in paragraph 7.2 of the Places for Everyone Plan. It states:

"...we are facing a housing crisis. It is adversely affected by the broken housing market that afflicts the country as a whole. The increase in rough sleeping over recent years has been the most visible manifestation of this but lying behind it is a much more extensive problem of many people being unable to access suitable housing at an affordable price and with certainty of tenure. Over 70,000 people are on our local authority housing waiting lists with almost 27,000 "reasonable preference". A lack of appropriate housing options prevents some people from forming their own households, particularly younger adults, whilst those who can, may have to cope with substandard or expensive accommodation. These problems are not universal, with the majority of people having access to good housing, but they are far too widespread in a modern city such as Greater Manchester and must be addressed. This Plan is one of the tools that we have to address these issues."

Core Strategy

Policy SP1 – Rochdale borough's role in the city region

- 3.9 Policy SP1 states that Rochdale will aim to contribute to the success of the Manchester City region and the North West by playing its part in the delivery of sustainable development and investment that meets national and sub regional objectives for housing and employment growth. This would be achieved by a range of measures, including providing improved housing quality and choice by working with private and public sector partners.

Policy C1 – Delivering the right amount of housing in the right place

- 3.10 Policy C1 of the Core Strategy seeks to maximise the potential of Previously Developed Land, including empty homes and buildings, within the urban area to achieve a target of 80% of new housing on Previously Developed Land.

Policy C3 – Delivering the right type of housing

- 3.11 This policy sets out that the Council's focus will be on widening housing choice and delivering housing that better suits the needs of existing and future residents.

Policy P3 – Improving design of new development

- 3.12 Policy P3 of the Core Strategy requires new development to adhere to high standards of design.

Policy G1 – Tackling and adapting to climate change

- 3.13 This policy states that the Council will address climate change by ensuring that growth does not lead to an increase in CO2 emissions. This will be achieved by locating growth in areas which are likely to minimise the need to travel and which are well served by public transport, services and infrastructure.

Policy G9 – Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land stability

- 3.14 Policy G9 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will reduce all forms of pollution, contamination and land stability. This includes requiring that development where development does not lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution, and ensuring that sensitive development, is not adversely affected by existing sources of pollution.

Policy T2 – Improving accessibility

- 3.15 Through this policy, the Council will locate development to minimise the need to travel by car and the number and lengths of car trips made to access local amenities.

Policy DM1 – General Development Requirements

- 3.16 This policy sets a number of detailed requirements for development in the borough. It is noted that Appendix 3 of the Core Strategy identifies that Policy H/12 of the Unitary Development Plan, which specifically addressed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), was replaced by Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy. As such, this policy is considered to be key to the determination of this application.
- 3.17 This policy requires development to be of a high quality, be compatible with surrounding land uses, not adversely affect the amenity of residents, mitigate against any impacts, provide satisfactory access and parking, demonstrate the availability of services and facilities, minimise opportunities for crime, take account of ground conditions, incorporate (where appropriate) high quality landscape schemes, have considered the availability of water infrastructure and does not lead to impacts detrimental to European Protected Sites.

Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD

- 3.18 Whilst not part of the development plan, Supplementary Planning Documents are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.19 Paragraph 4.1 of the SPD sets guidelines for the separation between dwellings. They are as follows:
- 21m between directly facing principal windows of habitable rooms;
 - 14m between a principal window and any directly facing two storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room;
 - 10m between a principal window and any direct any direct facing single storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room
- 3.20 The SPD recognises that the subdivision of properties can make an important contribution to the housing market by providing low cost accommodation. In relation to HMOs, paragraph 4.12 of the guidance states:
- “...the subdivision of a property to create additional dwellings or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) can intensify the level of occupation and may give rise to additional noise and disturbance. Neighbouring residents may be affected adversely, either directly, through party walls, or indirectly, as a result of increased traffic movements and parking problems. Large detached dwellings are generally more suitable for sub-division into smaller units; terraced properties, unless large, are less suited to this form of development because of noise transmission through party walls and the likelihood that any on-street parking problems which may exist will be compounded.”*

4 Planning Assessment

4.1 The starting point for determining any planning application is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), which states that “where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”. The NPPF at paragraphs 2 and 47 reinforces this requirement and at paragraph 12 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as a starting point for decision making, and that where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted.

4.2 The planning application submission raises some planning issues, and this statement now appraises the proposal in respect of the following issues:

- Principle of development;
- Residential amenity;
- Highways safety and parking.

Principle of development

4.3 The site is located in a sustainable location, just a short distance away from Rochdale Town Centre, Rochdale Train Station and a tram stop (c. 8 minute walk). Bus stops are located on Drake Street, less than 100m away from the site, which offer a regular service to Rochdale Town Centre and other locations such as Manchester City Centre and Middleton. Due to the site's sustainable location, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy T2 of the Adopted Core Strategy, which seeks to minimise the need to travel by car.

4.4 A number of similar uses are located in close proximity to this site. This includes the adjoining property, No. 15 Ann Street, which operates as a HMO. Opposite the site is the Petrus Hub, a shelter for local homeless people. The wider area has also seen former commercial uses converted into residential uses, such as 148 Drake Street which was converted from a hotel to 8 self-contained flats. In this regard, it is noted that the Council do not have a policy which controls the number of HMOs to be permitted within a certain location.

- 4.5 The site is currently vacant, having previously been granted planning permission for the change of use to B8 uses in 2021. Prior to the 2021 application, the property was also vacant following a long period of vacancy, which demonstrates the lack of market interest in using the site for commercial / employment purposes. The proposal offers the opportunity to make an effective use of the vacant building, which will safeguard the property from vandalism. Furthermore, the conversion of the property provides opportunities to improve the streetscene in the area, as the building is in need of refurbishment.
- 4.6 In this regard, it is noted that the Council has permitted schemes for the conversion of commercial uses into HMOs in recent years. This includes proposals at 22 Milkstone Place, Rochdale and 1 – 3 Pitt Street whereby the principle of the loss of commercial space to HMO uses was considered to be acceptable.
- 4.7 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable.

Residential amenity

- 4.8 The Council's development plan does not provide space standards for HMOs. Minimum standards are however provided through the Rochdale Borough Council's Strategic Housing Services HMO Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (August 2023) in relation to the licensing of HMO properties. This requires single bedrooms to have a minimum floor area of 6.5m². As identified on the proposed floorplans, the proposal would provide 8 ensuite bedrooms, all of which exceed this minimum requirement. The space provided are as follows:
- Bedroom 1 – single occupancy 7.9m²
 - Bedroom 2 – single occupancy 7.3m²
 - Bedroom 3 – single occupancy 8.6m²
 - Bedroom 4 – single occupancy 6.7m²
 - Bedroom 5 – single occupancy 6.9m²
 - Bedroom 6 – single occupancy 7.1m²
 - Bedroom 7 – single occupancy 9.0m²
 - Bedroom 8 – single occupancy 7.5m²
- 4.9 For clarity, the en-suite bathrooms provided in each of the 8 bedrooms are excluded from the above floorspace calculations. Each of the en-suite bathrooms has

sufficient space for a toilet, shower and basin, and varies in size between 1.9m² to 2.5m².

- 4.10 The proposal would provide a kitchen / diner at ground floor level, which would provide a floorspace of 17.3m². This is in excess of the requirement set out in the HMO standards document of 16.7m² required for a kitchen/diner to be used between 6 to 10 individuals.
- 4.11 A separate living room is provided which measures 17.5m², which is in excess of the 16.7m² requirement for living rooms set out in the HMO standards document. As the sizes of the bedrooms and living accommodation meet and exceed the licensing requirements, it is considered that the proposal would provide a sufficient standard of living for future occupants.
- 4.12 The intention is to provide a high quality and aspirational accommodation to meet locally generated needs for independent living. The images below provide an indication of the specification and quality of finish that has been achieved on similar facilities. The intention is to match or exceed these levels in the proposal once complete,



Typical Kitchen Finish



A typical bedroom finish



A typical En-suite Bathroom arrangement and specification

- 4.13 The kitchen / dining room, living room and each individual bedroom is provided with sufficient natural light through appropriately sized and placed windows. This is to be achieved with the provision of 5 new windows to the rear of the property, three at ground floor level, and two at first floor level. Due to the location and orientation of the building, the insertion of these new windows will not cause any overlooking or loss of privacy for neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, it is not considered that the location or orientation of nearby buildings would cause any overshadowing issues to these bedrooms.
- 4.14 The proposal has a small rear yard, which can be used by residents alongside storing bins and bicycles. Sufficient opportunities are provided for residents just a short walk away from the application site for additional outdoor amenity space. For example, Broadfield Park is located approximately 100m away from the site, and offers a substantial amount of green space for residents to enjoy. Furthermore, it is noted that the Council's Development Plan and licensing requirements do not set requirements for the provision of outdoor amenity space, and a number of similar uses nearby have no or limited outdoor amenity space.

- 4.15 The lawful use of the building is currently B8 (storage and distribution) uses. If a commercial use could be re-established at the property, it would have the potential to cause noise and potentially odour pollution impacts to neighbouring properties. This risk is most notable to No. 15 Ann Street, which shares a party wall with the property. It is considered that the change of use of the property to a HMO would not adversely affect the amenity of nearby residents, therefore complying with Policy DM1 of the Adopted Core Strategy.
- 4.16 It is noted that a number of commercial uses are located near to the application site. This includes an M.O.T. Garage to the north of the site, which has recently been constructed following the grant of planning permission in November 2022 (Ref: 22/01120/FUL). Through the determination of that application, the Council considered the potential impacts on residential amenity for the property directly to the south of the application site (No. 11-15 Ann Street also used as a HMO). In this regard, the Planning Officer states:
- "The construction of an MOT garage is unlikely to cause a significantly greater degree of noise, disturbance and pollution, particularly given its location within the mixed used area with a number of other garages located in close vicinity to the site."*
- 4.17 Given that the adjoining property was already in use as a HMO, the same conclusion can be reached that here that the provision of a M.O.T. garage to the rear of the application site does not cause substantial impacts to residential amenity, therefore complying with Policies DM1 and G9 of the Adopted Core Strategy. Furthermore, the aforementioned planning permission provides conditions to controlling the opening hours of the garage, further limiting the potential for impacts on residential amenity.
- 4.18 Notwithstanding, the above it is acknowledged that the main access and focus of activity to this M.O.T. garage is in proximity to the application site, and a Noise Assessment assessing the current and forecasting the future noise environment upon completion for the building has been undertaken by Peak Acoustics. The Assessment is included within the application package and concludes that noise affecting the development was determined to be primarily from road traffic and nearby commercial units.

- 4.19 A glazing and ventilation scheme has been provided to ensure that conditions in habitable rooms remain within the design criteria. Consequently, internal noise levels are anticipated to be within the guidelines of BS8233.
- 4.20 Sufficient space is available to the rear of the property for the siting of bins, which is indicated on the relevant floorplans. The proposal has been designed to provide the communal living space to the rear of the property, as such providing access to the rear yard for all residents will not cause any privacy issues.

Highways Safety and Parking

- 4.21 The application does not provide off-street parking, but opportunities for on-street parking are available on Ann Street and other nearby roads. The site is currently permitted to be used for B8 uses (storage and distribution), which is likely to require car parking and transport movements well in excess of the HMO proposes through this application. In our experience it is highly unlikely SSP's customer groups will own or have access to cars until they are living independently and therefore in other accommodation away from 5-9 Ann St.
- 4.22 The site is located approximately 85 metres away from a bus stop of Drake Street, which offers a regular service to Rochdale Town Centre and other connections. This bus stop serves the number 17 and 17a bus, with services available every 10 minutes. The availability of this service, and the nearby location of a range of services and facilities, in turn reduces the parking demand for the building.
- 4.23 Furthermore, the proposal seeks to provide 10 x cycle spaces to the rear of the building. This provision of more than 1 space per bedroom is considered to be more than sufficient for future occupants, and will encourage the uptake in sustainable travel.
- 4.24 As such, having regard to the characteristics of the proposed development and the existing legal use of the building, it is considered that the proposal provides satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, and as such complies with Policies DM1 and T2 of the Adopted Core Strategy.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 This Planning Statement has set out how the proposal at 5 – 9 Ann Street, Rochdale complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.
- 5.2 The proposal also provides a number of benefits which are material considerations. The proposal would re-use a property which has a history of being vacant for long periods of time. It would provide a low-cost living accommodation to residents in an area which is well served by public transport and services and facilities. Notably, a number of similar uses are found in close proximity to the site, and a HMO use has less opportunity to cause residential amenity issues with the neighbouring property (also in HMO use). The sustainable location of the site will bring about environmental benefits by reducing the demand for travelling by private motor car.
- 5.3 The scheme provides an appropriate standard of living for residents with bedrooms of sufficient size and layout, each of which have private bathrooms and their own sufficiently sized windows. A generously sized kitchen / dining room is located on the ground floor, with further space provided in the form of a living room. The kitchen / diner will provide residents with all of the facilities they require.
- 5.4 As such it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for this proposal.