

Planning Statement

In Support of Planning Application for
122-124 Bury New Road, Heywood, OL10 4RG

Proposal: Change of Use from Public House (Sui Generis) into 2 No. Shop Units (Class E)
and 2 No. Self-Contained Flats (Class C3)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the proposed change of use of the vacant former public house known as the “Hark to Towler” at 122-124 Bury New Road, Heywood.
- 1.2 The proposal seeks to convert the ground floor from a public house (Sui Generis) into two Class E shop units, and to convert the first floor into two self-contained residential flats (Class C3).
- 1.3 This application is informed by the pre-application advice issued by Rochdale Council (Ref: PREAPP/00020/25, dated 24 April 2025), and is supported by the accompanying drawings (REV C), heritage statement and noise impact assessment.

2. SITE AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The application site comprises a two-storey building prominently located on Bury New Road, within the defined ‘Summit Local Centre’. The site is surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential uses including a GP surgery, pharmacy, and residential terraces. The building has been vacant for a significant period and is in a deteriorating condition.
- 2.2 The property is within the Defined Urban Area (UDP Policy G/D/1) and sits within the Summit Local Centre (UDP Policy S/6).

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Application Ref: 23/00600/FUL – Refused in January 2024 for conversion of the public house into 4 self-contained flats due to concerns about design, amenity, and loss of a community facility without sufficient justification.
- 3.2 This new proposal responds directly to those concerns by:
 - Retaining commercial use at ground floor to support the vitality of the local centre,
 - Reducing the number of flats to two (with appropriate amenity and access), and
 - Minimising external alterations to preserve the building's character.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The building was last in use as a public house (Sui Generis), with ancillary residential accommodation on the upper floor. The building is currently vacant, in a deteriorated condition, and has been stripped internally.
- 4.2 Ground Floor: Commercial Use - Retail (Class E)
- 4.2.1 The existing ground floor, currently comprising the former bar and ancillary areas, will be reconfigured to form two separate shop units, measuring approximately 52.8 square metres and 42.3 square metres respectively.
- 4.2.2 Each unit will retain its own independent entrance from Bury New Road, maintaining active street frontage. To the rear of the premises, a shared bin and cycle storage facilities are proposed ensuring practicality and ease of servicing.
- 4.3 First Floor: Residential Use (Class C3)
- 4.3.1 The first floor will be converted to create two self-contained residential flats. Flat 1 will be a two-bedroom unit suitable for up to three occupants, with an internal floor area of 61.6 square metres. Flat 2 will be a one-bedroom unit for single occupancy, with a floor area of 40.9 square metres.
- 4.3.2 Both flats will include open-plan kitchen and living spaces, bathrooms, and benefit from adequate natural light and ventilation to meet modern residential standards.
- 4.3.3 Access to the flats was originally proposed to be shared with the two Class E units via the rear of the property. However, in response to pre-application advice, this arrangement has been revised. The residential units will now be accessed independently from the side of the property, ensuring clear separation from the ground floor commercial uses and enhancing residential amenity.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Section 2 Achieving sustainable development
 - Section 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Section 7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres
 - Section 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - Section 9 Promoting sustainable transport
 - Section 12 Achieving well-designed places
 - Section 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

5.2 Development Plan

- 5.2.1 Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.
- 5.2.2 The development plan for the proposal consists of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan, Rochdale Core Strategy (CS), adopted 2016, and saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies. The Council also has an adopted series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

5.3 Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) (2024)

5.3.1 Sustainable and Resilient Places

- JP-S1 Sustainable Development
- JP-S2 Carbon and Energy
- JP-S3 Heat and Energy Networks
- JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- JP-S5 Clean Air
- JP-S6 Resource Efficiency

5.3.2 Greener Places

- JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Places for People
- JP-P1 Sustainable Places

5.3.3 Connected Places

- JP-C1 An integrated Network
- JP-C3 Public Transport
- JP-C6 Walking and Cycling
- JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

5.4 Rochdale Core Strategy (CS)

5.4.1 SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

- C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
- C3 Delivering the right type of housing
- C6 Improving health and well-being
- C8 Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities

5.4.2 SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

- P1 Improving image
- P3 Improving design of new development

5.4.3 S04 Promoting a Greener Environment

- G6 Enhancing Green Infrastructure
- G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
- G8 Managing water resources and flood risk
- G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

5.4.4 S05 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

- T2 Improving accessibility
- Appendix 5 Schedule of Parking Standards

5.4.5 Managing delivery and monitoring progress

- DM1 General development requirements
- SD1 Delivering sustainable development

5.5 Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals map allocation

- G/D/1 Defined Urban Area
- G/S/1 Hierarchy and Roles of Centres
- S/6 District Centre, Local Centres and Linear Commercial Areas

5.6 National Design Guide (2019) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

5.7 National Planning Practice Guidance.

6. KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Loss of Public House

6.1.1 Marketing evidence confirms the property has remained vacant for a prolonged period and has not attracted interest for continued pub use. The building has significant structural and functional limitations. Viability concerns are further supported by the proximity of alternative establishments – The Summit and Horse & Jockey public houses – within walking distance. This satisfies NPPF paragraph 98 and local policy regarding the protection of community facilities.

6.1.2 Due to changes in social habits, economic conditions, and the high maintenance costs associated with older buildings, smaller local public houses have become increasingly difficult to operate viably. The internal configuration, lack of external customer areas, and physical condition of the building also present operational challenges.

6.2 Economic and Social Contribution

6.2.1 The introduction of Class E uses will contribute positively to the retail offer and viability of the local centre, in line with Policy S/6. It ensures the building remains active at street level, providing economic and community benefit.

6.3 Design and Heritage

6.3.1 The building is recognised as a non-designated heritage asset, and the proposals have been sensitively designed to respect and preserve its historic character.

6.3.2 The scheme includes repair and repainting of the external render to match the existing materials, along with the retaining or replicating traditional timber sash windows. New openings have been kept to a minimum to maintain the integrity of the original elevations. In addition, the existing signage will be removed and new signage in similar fashion will be introduced.

6.4 Residential Amenity

6.4.1 The proposed flats comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards, and amenity for both new and existing residents has been carefully considered. A Noise Impact Assessment is included to address potential noise from the Class E uses below. It is also noted that the number of rooms within the existing and proposed building layouts are not dissimilar, and therefore the level of occupation will not materially increase. Consequently, there is no additional demand for amenity space arising from the proposals.

6.5 Highway Safety and Access

6.5.1 The Local Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposal.

6.5.2 The site is located in a sustainable area with good access to public transport, including nearby bus services. Traffic generation associated with the development is expected to be minimal.

6.5.3 The scheme benefits from on-site provision of cycle storage and dedicated bin storage facilities, supporting active travel and efficient waste management. Servicing of the premises can be accommodated from either Bury New Road or Higher Lomax Lane, ensuring operational flexibility.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed development represents a sustainable and beneficial reuse of a vacant building within a defined local centre. It accords with both national and local planning policy objectives by contributing to economic vitality, improving the appearance and functionality of the building, and supporting local housing provision. The scheme has been informed by pre-application feedback and is policy-compliant in all material respects. Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought.