

Vega Sky Properties

**Change of Use of C3 dwelling to Sui Generis 8-bed HMO at
14 St James Terrace
Heywood
Rochdale
OL10 3AB**

March 2026
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PLANNING SUBMISSION

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Figure 1 – Front elevation, 14 St James Terrace, Heywood



Figure 2 – Rear elevation, view from Cartridge Street

1. Introduction

1.1 The Application

This planning application is a change of use of an existing 4-bed / C3 dwelling at 14 St James Terrace, Heywood, to an 8-person, 8-bed / Sui Generis House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO). (See Figures 1-2.)

1.2 The Applicant

The applicant is Vega Sky Properties, who specialise developing and managing private and shared housing in the Greater-Manchester area for working professionals.

1.3 Background

The proposal site presents an opportunity to diversify the range of housing options available to Heywood. Shared accommodation can provide an important form of housing for single professionals and workers who may not require or be able to access self-contained accommodation.

There is no planning history within the public access records. However, the property's current size and layout make it well suited for a conversion to shared accommodation. The surrounding area benefits from good accessibility, local services and available on-street parking. The intention is to provide well-managed, good-quality accommodation in a sustainable location close to employment opportunities, amenities and public transport.

1.4 Applicant's Agent

This application has been produced by RS Studio on behalf of the applicant.

2. Context

2.1 The Requirement

The proposal intends to create an 8-bed HMO within the existing footprint of the building. The design standards for HMO living are demonstrated within the application's proposed drawings. It is understood that an HMO landlord license application is necessary in addition to planning approval.

Heywood and the surrounding area benefit from a number of significant employment locations. These include Heywood Distribution Park, Pilsworth Industrial Estate and Heywood Industrial Estate – all of which provide substantial employment opportunities in logistics,



Figure 3 – Aerial view of site within its setting (courtesy of Google maps)

manufacturing and associated sectors. It is noted up to 20,000 new jobs are expected to be created as part of the proposed development known as Atom Valley.

The intention of the HMO conversion is to provide a high standard of accommodation at an accessible price point, supporting local employment, and providing an additional housing choice within Heywood. At present there appears to be limited, co-living accommodation within the immediate area, meaning potential residents may otherwise need to look to surrounding towns such as Rochdale, Bury or Middleton. Providing good quality shared accommodation within Heywood allows people working locally to live closer to their place of employment and services.

2.2 Site Location

The application site is located within central Heywood within postcode OL10 3AB. The site falls within the boundaries of Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale. (See Figure 3.)

2.3 Site Description

No.14 is a mid-terraced Victorian dwelling built within a row of four, and adjacent a separate terrace of 5 dwellings (one converted into 2 flats). Both terraces are built along the curtilage of the Church of St James, a Grade II listed structure erected in 1838. The dwellings have north-east front-facing elevations toward the church and the cemetery with a cobbled stone road for street parking for residents of the terraces. The rear of the site extends to Cartridge Street.

The front elevations remain quite consistent in terms of window and door designs and positions within the terrace. No.14 shares an interesting rear projection with the adjacent no.16 that includes a pentagonal roof design. There is no planning history within the current public access search, but the photographs of the site indicate the dwelling was adapted with an accessible shower room beyond its kitchen and utility rooms.

The dwelling comprises four floors. Internally the dwelling has a small cellar, and its ground floor consists of a vestibule and hallway, two reception rooms, and an inner hallway leading into the kitchen. Beyond the kitchen is a utility room that leads into the accessible shower room. There is a garden outbuilding adjacent the shower room with a rear door that leads into the garden. The first floor has a split-level landing leading into two bedrooms and a bathroom at one end, and toward a small WC, a third bedroom with a shower room toward the rear of the building. There is a fourth bedroom located within the second floor.

The side-return garden is block paved with a wall and fence within its shared boundary toward no.12 and a brick wall with a gate along the rear toward Cartridge Street. In addition to



Figure 4 – Church of St James (courtesy Google of maps)

parking along the front of the property, Cartridge Street is also a convenient location for vehicles with the existing rear gate access.

2.4 Area Character

The site is positioned within the built-up urban land. The dwelling is southwest of a Grade II listed church and its curtilage (Figure 4), and the remaining local area to either side and along the rear of the terrace is for residential use. The site is sustainable within walking distance to public transportation along Pilsworth Road and Mellor Brow junction and toward Bridge Street where there are various shops and services (10-minute walk). There are no nearby SINCs or SSSIs, and outside of any air quality management areas.

2.5 Planning Policy

Key policies/documents that were considered in the preparation of this application are (with relevant subcategories highlighted):

Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy 2016

SP2 – The Spatial Strategy for the borough, 1) to deliver most new housing and improvements in areas including Heywood town centres.

SP3/H – The Strategy for Heywood, including delivering homes in or around town centre (C1, C2)

E1 – Establishing thriving town, district and local centres; to achieve this with a focus on residential offerings and maintaining Heywood as the third largest retail centre.

C1 – Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places, and ensuring that sites are sustainable with good access to local services, public transport, etc.

C2 – Focusing on regeneration areas and economic growth corridors / areas, 1) Central Heywood, a) deliver additional dwellings for sale and rent to widen the housing choice of the area.

P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage, 1) Protect and enhance the distinctiveness of its housing areas and e) townscape character; 2) Protect the borough's heritage, a) its heritage assets ii) its listed buildings.

G1 – Tackling and adapting to climate change, including locating growth in areas to minimise need for independent vehicle travel or well-served by public transportation, new developments are expected to reduce CO2 emissions by incorporating renewal energy.

G7 – Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity, 5) Urban Areas to protect or enhance biodiversity (green roofs, bat boxes, for example)

DM1 – General development requirements, a) High quality design and opportunity to enhance the area, b) Compatible with surrounding land uses and impacts on future residents / users, c) No adverse impact on residents or users with visual intrusion, overbearing, overshadowing, loss of privacy.



Figure 5 - Flood Zone 1 demonstrated



Figure 6 - Surface water flood extent annual likelihood of flooding (1 in 30 chance)

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development (June 2016)

Rochdale Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2027

Other Relevant Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Emerging Rochdale Draft Local Plan (Reg 18)

H7 - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) - New or conversion for HMOs would need to consider impacts to the character of the area, neighbouring amenities, adequate outdoor amenity space, bin storage, parking (if necessary). Controls will also come into place to restrict concentration of HMOs in an area (not more than 10% in a 50m radius).

3. Survey / Investigation of the Existing Building and Site

3.1 Flood Risk

The Environment Agency flood risk maps were reviewed, and it was identified that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 (Figures 5-6), and therefore no further flood risk assessment work has been undertaken.

3.2 Ecology

The DEFRA Magic Map has been reviewed, and no further protected species were noted within or immediately surrounding the site. As such no further assessment work has been undertaken.

3.3 Arboriculture

There are no trees on site, and any trees adjacent the site within the church yard or beyond Cartridge Street will not be impacted with the proposed internal alterations. As such no further assessment work has been undertaken.

3.4 Transport

The existing dwelling does not provide any off-road parking. On-road parking is available along the front of the property along St James Terrace, Tower Street or directly behind the building along Cartridge Street. The site is currently outside of any residential parking permit scheme requiring permits or controls of parking.



Figure 7 – Indicative site and ground floor plan, 14 St James Terrace, Heywood

3.5 Noise Impact

The site is currently within a residential area, adjacent other dwellings and a church yard. As the surrounding area is primarily residential, with the church yard as the exception, there are no other potential noise outlets from any commercial sites that may affect local occupants. (For the change of use noise assessment, please see section 4.10 of this document.)

3.6 Utilities

As the site is residential as existing, the dwelling has ready access to water, drainage and electricity.

4. Proposed Change of Use

4.1 Amount

The proposal will retain the existing footprint of the residential dwelling as existing, requiring only internal alterations to adapt the rooms to meet the proposed use sufficiently. The proposal site measures approximately 188.6m². (See Figure 7.)

4.2 Layout

Floor plans have been provided within the application details, and demonstrate the required standards of bedrooms, bathrooms, cooking areas, and communal living spaces.

The ground floor maintains its existing hallway and access, while converting the two front rooms to ensuite bedrooms. The original kitchen area will be converted and extended into its original utility room to provide a large 30m² open-planned kitchen/living space with sufficient facilities and access to outside amenity space. Toward the rear of the building will be an additional ensuite bedroom.

The first floor will be adjusted by creating three ensuite bedrooms within the former bedroom/bathroom spaces toward the front of the building. Along the rear will be a seventh larger ensuite bedroom. The second floor will then complete the eighth bedroom.

4.3 Scale

No further extensions beyond the original building's footprint are necessary. Outdoor amenity space is also retained for communal use and includes the required bin and bike storage (4 x 240L general waste, food, garden and recycling; and a bike store for eight bikes). Residential bin collection will be managed as per the existing borough's residential collection calendar.

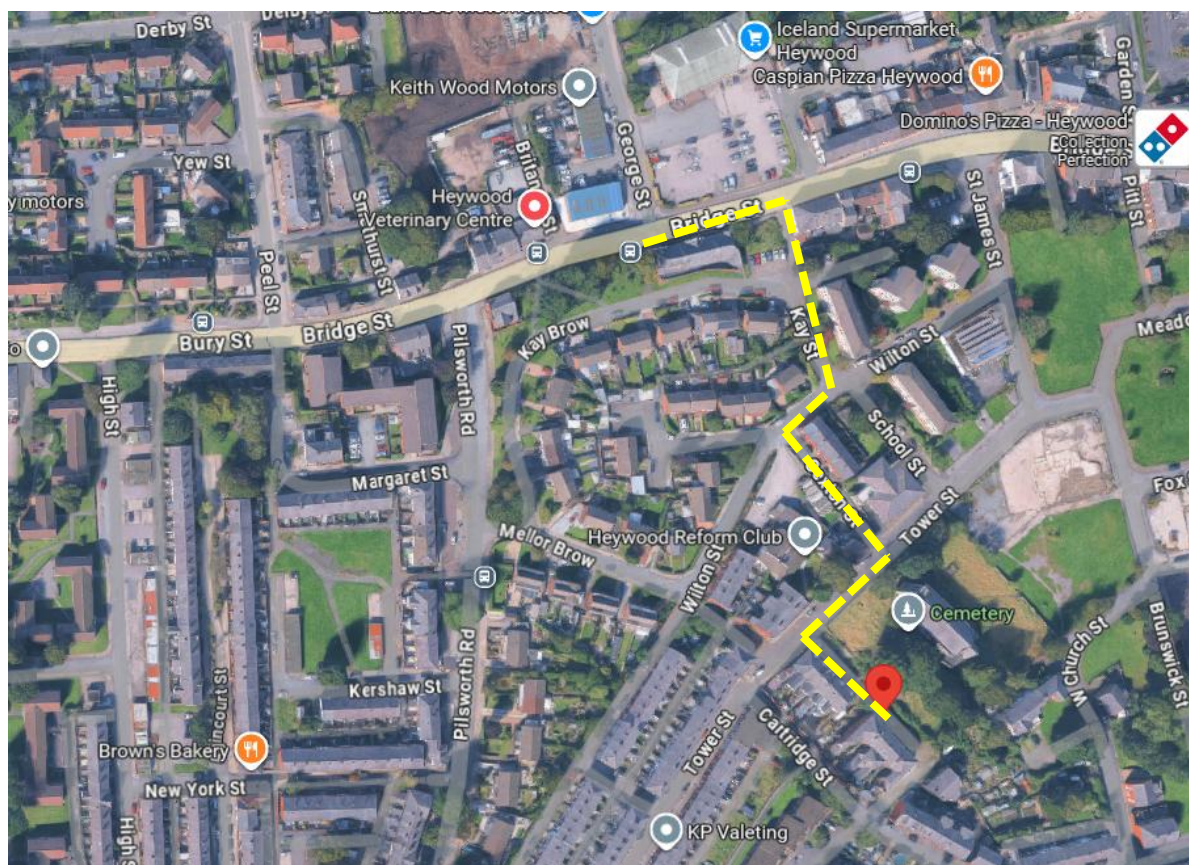


Figure 8 - Proposed distance to bus and Bridge Street = 4-minute walk



Figure 9 - Cartridge Street to the south of the property (courtesy of Google maps)

4.4 Appearance

The mid-terrace Victorian dwelling is built with red Flemish bond brickwork with stone headers above the windows along the front elevation. The window glazing is not original, but the front entrance door with its transom window appears to be. The rear of the building has various wall finishes in addition to brick with mixed pebble-dashing and other smooth render finishes. Where applicable, the external appearance will benefit from a clean and repair, but no change to the original dwelling's finishes is expected.

4.5 Landscaping

The existing outdoor space has a low wall with bedding plants along the front elevation that will be retained. The rear garden is currently block-paved and will be cleaned and maintained for outdoor communal space. Along the rear of the garden will be general waste and recycling bins and its bike store. The rear boundary is an existing brick wall with a gate to provide easy access for the bin and bike movements as necessary.

4.6 Access and Inclusion

Site access will remain as existing with the site accessible from the front, side and rear elevations.

4.7 Sustainability

Compliance to all relevant Building Regulations and LPA policy and licensing for HMO standards are anticipated. The site is within a sustainable location as it is within walking distance to local services and shops, so it is anticipated the future occupants would not be dependent on private vehicle travel.

The property is also well connected to public transport as regular bus services operate between Heywood and surrounding town centres including Bolton, Bury and Rochdale via the 471 service. The nearest stop on Bridge Street is approximately a four-minute walk from the property. There is also a regular service into Manchester city centre via the 163 route to Piccadilly Gardens. In addition, Metrolink stations at Bury, Radcliffe and Whitefield are accessible from Heywood, providing further connectivity into Manchester city centre and the wider Greater Manchester area. (See Figure 8.)

4.8 Transport and Parking

The site is within a residential area with parking available within surrounding roads. Parking along Cartridge Street behind the building appears to be plentiful. (See Figure 9.) The proposal includes a bike store within the rear garden to encourage other sustainable travel. In the absence of any adopted parking standards for HMOs and any clear evidence of local parking issues, the proposal would not result in a material shortage in parking provision in this location or impacts to highway safety with the continued residential use.

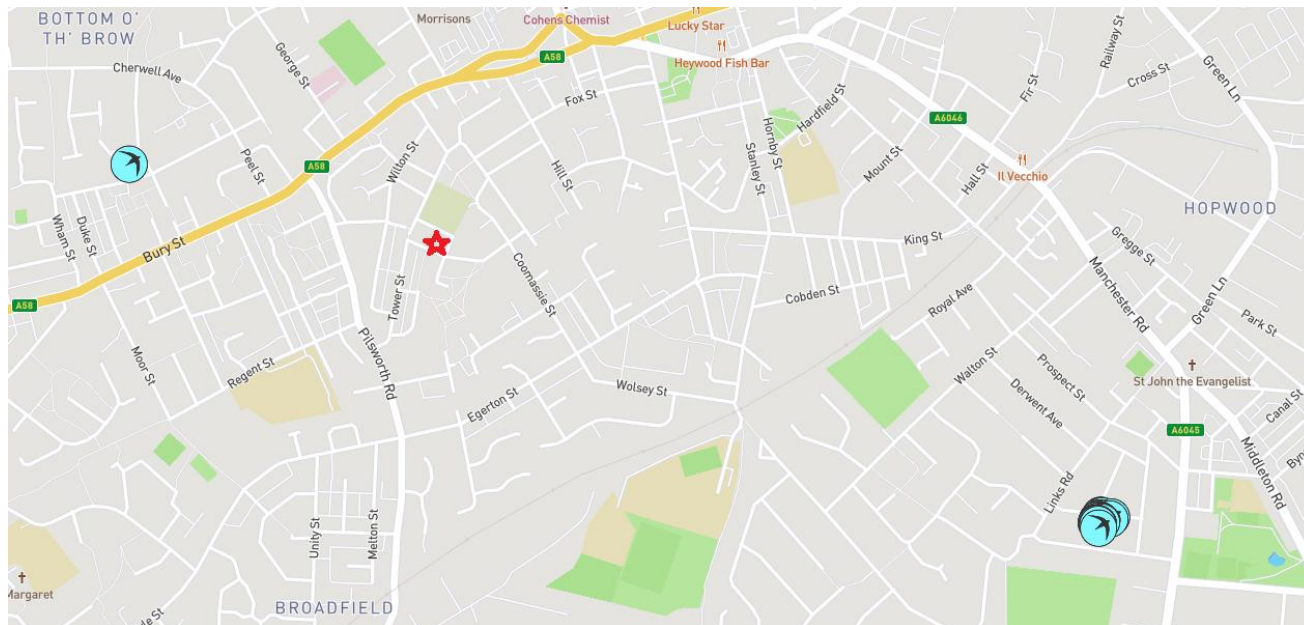


Figure 10 – Site (in red) and evidence of swift nests within the wider area (courtesy of SwiftMapper)

4.9 Foul and Surface Water Drainage

Foul water connections will be made as required. There would not be any increase to development to require any necessary upgrades to the existing surface water management. All guttering and drainage connections will be inspected and maintained as required.

4.10 Acoustic Insulation and Noise Consideration

Refurbishment of the layouts to the building will include acoustic insulation adjacent the party walls and around private rooms and communal spaces. This will remove any concerns of any unacceptable noise transference to future occupants as well as neighbouring dwellings adjacent. Vega Sky Properties has provided their HMO Management Plan as part of the application consideration to demonstrate the scrutiny process of their tenants and a complete understanding of the 'house rules' to avoid any impact to other tenants or the local residents.

4.11 Biodiversity

DEFRA's databases were reviewed and no known species (flora or fauna) had been identified within the site. However, the application does include the provision of two RSPB-approved swift boxes within the side wall near the eaves of the building (as detailed within a separate document). Consideration to any other bird or bat species provision could be agreed in advance of any planning decision or by an agreed carefully worded planning condition. (See Figure 10.)

5. Planning Statement

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

To support the proposal, the NPPF has been reviewed and relevant sections have been highlight below:

Para 39: Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Para 48: Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

Para 49: Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given); b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the

SP3/H - The Strategy for Heywood

The priorities for Heywood are to:

Regenerate Heywood town centre (SO1,SO2,SO3,SO5) by:

- Promoting additional appropriate sized retail units in the town centre to provide a better retail offer (Policy E1);
- Delivering public transport improvements including a new hub (Policy T1); and
- Improving north south pedestrian links between the Leisure Village, the Times Retail Park, Market Street and possible new retail development to the south of Market Street (Policy T1).

Transform Inner Heywood (SO2,SO3,SO4,SO5) by:

- Delivering new homes in and around the town centre to widen housing choice (Policies C1,C2);
- Redeveloping unsuitable employment sites for better uses (Policy C2);
- Improving the quality of open space (Policy G6); and
- Increasing opportunities for healthier lifestyles through improving access to the new leisure village, Queens Park and the Roch and Ashworth valleys (Policy C8).

Promote economic growth in South Heywood (SO1,SO2,SO3,SO5) by:

- Delivering new economic development on sites within the successful employment areas in the south of the town to maintain their national reputation as a high quality business location (Policy E3);
- Developing higher value housing to support and complement this economic growth area and promote wider prosperity (Policies C1,C3); and
- Promoting infrastructure improvements and traffic management to service new and existing development and reduce heavy goods traffic in Heywood town centre and residential areas (Policies E3,T1).

Figure 11 - Policy SP3/H of the Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy

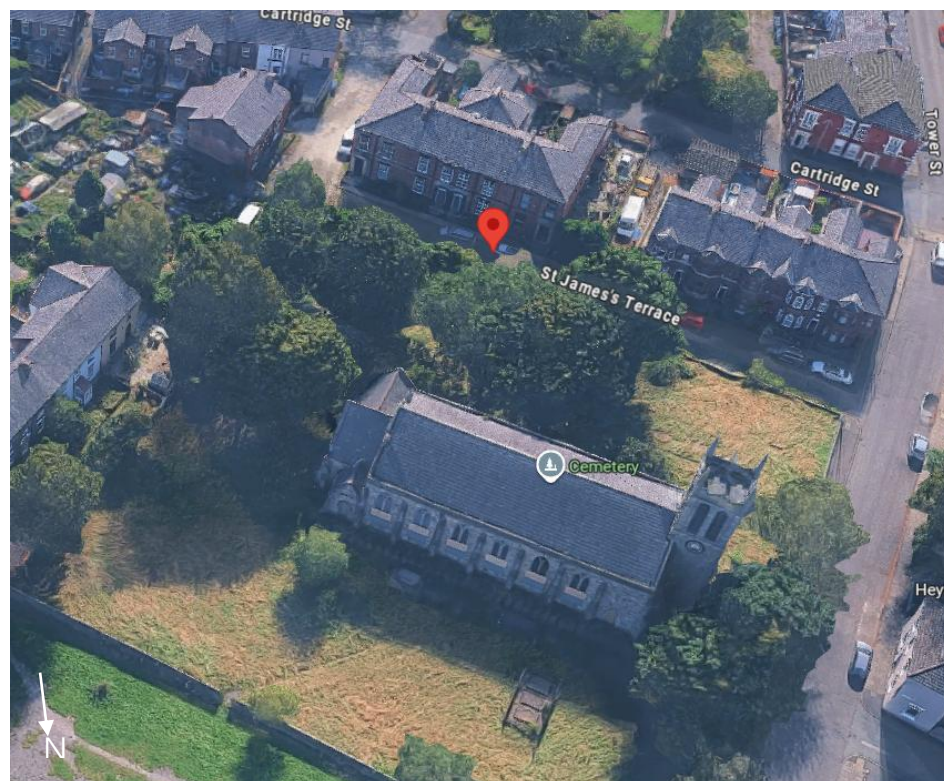


Figure 12 - Church of St James in proximity to no.14 St James Terrace

greater the weight that may be given); and c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

Para 207: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

5.2 Location of Proposal (Principle of Development)

Policy SP2 of Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy outlines the Spatial Strategy, including Heywood town centre. The policy states that new housing and employment will be focused near town centres where there is good access to existing facilities and infrastructure. Policy SP3/H defines the priorities for Heywood in particular to deliver new housing in and around the town centre, as well as widen housing choices available for sale or rent (Policies C1, C2). (See Figure 11.)

Heywood is an established town centre location with a wide range of amenities within walking distance of the property. These include Morrisons, Iceland, B&M, opticians, Boots pharmacy, GP surgeries and a variety of independent shops and services, all within approximately a 10-minute walk of the property. The site is within proximity to public transport for connections to the surrounding town centres. The conversion to HMO use would comply with the preferred location for new housing within local policies, and this would establish the principle of development, pending compliance with other relevant policies.

5.3 Character of the Area and Listed Building Assessment

The dwelling is positioned adjacent to the Church of St James, a Grade II listed structure, and its cemetery. The church had been built in 1838 to support the local workers of some 67 cotton mills within that time period and closed in 2014 for this use. It is currently standing as a well-appreciated and widely visible ashlar stone structure set central within its churchyard.

The proposal site is not within a conservation area, but consideration to the listed structure has been assessed. There are no proposed external alterations that will impact the current setting of the area, and no.14 will still remain within residential use. The bike and bin storage proposed will be retained within the property's rear garden to avoid any unsightly impacts to the wider street scene. Therefore, the proposal would have neutral impact on the setting of the listed building, therefore preserves the setting of the listed building in accordance with Sections 66 and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the NPPF Section 16. As the building's use remains as residential without any external changes to the building, the proposal would comply with Policy P2 of the Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy. (See Figure 12.)

DM1 - General Development Requirements

All development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations, will be expected to demonstrate that they:

- a. Are of high-quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area;
- b. Are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users;
- c. Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy;
- d. Mitigate against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access, where such mitigation is identified as being necessary;
- e. Provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account the proposed use and location;
- f. Do not have an adverse impact on health, through its impact or the effect of existing problems e.g. land contamination or poor air quality;
- g. Provide, or demonstrate the availability of, the service and community infrastructure necessary to meet local needs e.g. local shops, community, leisure and sport facilities and provision of open space;
- h. Minimise opportunities for crime against people or property;
- i. Take account of ground conditions including unstable or contaminated land - where a potential risk exists, a survey should be carried out and any necessary remedial measures identified and carried out;
- j. Incorporate, where appropriate, high-quality landscaping schemes;
- k. Have taken account of drainage and considered the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure, and any need for additional capacity; and
- l. Respect natural features by conserving, restoring or enhancing biodiversity and minimising any adverse impact.

Figure 13 - Policy DM1 in full that has been considered within this proposal.

5.4 Residential Amenity Assessment

Local and national policies require planning proposals to consider impact to the area and neighbouring amenities. The existing 4-bedroom dwelling has been assessed to meet the 4-bed/8-person design standards against the Technical Housing Standards (Nationally Described Space Standards). Only internal alterations are proposed within this application and will not extend the building to create any harmful impacts to neighbouring amenities such as overbearing or overshadowing. No new window openings are proposed, and the condition of windows will be inspected and repaired/replaced if necessary. A ground floor obscure-glazed window will be replaced with clear glazing as it will serve a bedroom. Therefore, no harmful impacts of overlooking or loss of privacy would occur.

The layout changes proposed will retain the communal hallway and stairwells that share a party wall with the adjacent no.16. The main communal space of a kitchen/dining/living room proposed at ground floor level will sit adjacent the kitchen/dining room of no.16, so the room use should not create further harmful noise or use impacts than what would be expected from its previous kitchen use. The outdoor space will remain for the occupants' amenity use, as well as provide storage of waste and recycling bins. The addition of a bike store is an acceptable addition to any residential site without the benefit of a garage or separate outbuilding.

It should be noted that noise and activity associated with residential use is not, by definition, harmful, and that planning decisions must be based on a realistic assessment of likely impacts rather than generalised assumptions about HMOs. As noted in Section 4.10 of this document, acoustic insulation will be used internally as part of the refurbishment. This will help ensure future occupants as well as neighbouring dwellings will experience a more private environment. Also to ensure the property will be professionally managed, please see the HMO Management Plan submitted (as a separate document) within the application's details. Based upon consideration to the above, the proposal will comply with Policy DM1 as no further adverse impact on residents or users is demonstrated. (See Figure 13.)

5.5 Intensification of Use and HMO Standards

As stated within Section 5.4, the existing building meets design standards for an 8-person dwelling. The conversion proposed must consider more than just the number of individuals, as the use of the building for eight separate individuals that may come and go at different times, eat meals separately etc may be different from traditional family setups. However, it is likely that most modern single-family homes for eight individuals could experience similar activity to an HMO, especially as most young adults are struggling to find their own housing options and where extended family living is more common than 20 years ago. The proposed increase in the number of occupiers would generate additional comings and goings, and additional pedestrian movements may be perceptible to the occupants of the terrace, but this would not give rise to undue noise and disturbance in itself.

Policy H7 - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Proposals for new HMOs, either conversions or new-build, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. The proposal would not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the surrounding area and the amenity of residents in any neighbouring properties by reason of noise, visual intrusion or loss of privacy;
- b. The proposal would provide adequate outdoor amenity space and bin storage areas;
- c. The proposal would make suitable, safe and convenient arrangements for access, parking and servicing; and
- d. The proposal would not result in an unacceptable concentration of HMOs in the area. Proposals which would result in more than 10% of properties (residential and commercial) being classed as HMOs within a 50m radius of the application property will not be considered acceptable.

Figure 14 - Rochdale Borough Draft Local Plan - Regulation 18 Consultation

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF would allow LPAs to give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans. The current Core Strategy, for example, does not have a specific HMO policy whilst Policy H7 within the Regulation 18 Local Plan states that HMOs (even conversions) will be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is no significant adverse impact on the area's character, neighbouring amenities, and sufficient outdoor amenity space is provided, and impacts to highways are considered acceptable. In addition, there will be a restriction proposed that no more than 10% of HMOs are concentrated within a 50m radius area. (See Figure 14.)

In consideration of emerging Policy H7, the existing HMO licensing register had listed 20 Heywood properties out of a list of 205 in the Rochdale borough (as of 9 March 2026). A check of the local area within 50m of St James Terrace had not resulted any listings on the most current licensing register. Although small HMOs prior to 29 April 2025 may not have required a license (and therefore may not be on the public register), it is assumed the area within the proposal would not exceed more than 10% of HMOs based on current public records. Compliance of the emerging Policy H7 would be demonstrated.

HMOs can be counted within a council's 5-year housing land supply for housing delivery targets and would add to the range of housing options available to the area for single professionals and workers who may not have access (or need) of self-contained accommodation. The HMO general arrangement layouts displayed within the proposed drawings have been assessed against the Housing Act 2004 standards for room sizes, space standards, and facilities. (It is expected that the technical details of fire safety, heating, electrical sockets, ventilation, lighting, etc will be assessed further within the HMO licensing and building regulation scrutiny - outside the planning remit.) It is considered the internal layouts and design standards comply with Policy DM1.

As noted within previous sections of this document, the applicant has provided their HMO Management Plan (within a separate document) to ensure that any future occupants, neighbours, and the council's HMO licensing department are satisfied that the proposal will meet the standards necessary to avoid any further harmful impacts to the area with the dwelling's conversion.

5.6 Biodiversity Net Gain

The site has had biodiversity database checks (Magic Map from DEFRA), and no further priority habitats or species have been found within the site. The change of use does not involve any disturbance or impact to priority or non-priority habitats with the building's internal conversion only. Therefore, the change of use is considered subject to the de minimis exemption to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain requirement for the application's validation. As stated within Section 4.11 within this document, the application will include the installation

of two swift boxes to be placed within the eaves of the building in order to increase biodiversity activity to the site. The proposal is considered in compliance with Policy G7 and will potentially enhance biodiversity within the urban area.

5.7 Conclusion

The proposal for the conversion of the dwelling for HMO use has been assessed against both local and national planning policies. It is considered the proposal would provide another housing option to the Heywood central area within a sustainable location. There are no harmful impacts to neighbouring amenities expected to overcome without any external changes that would impact the wider area. Given that the proposal is compliant with planning policies, it is contended that the proposal should be supported.

Enclosed are the necessary documents within the application details for consideration. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF suggests local planning authorities should approach decisions in positive and creative way and work proactively with applicants on sustainable development. This document, along with other proposed drawings, HMO Management Plan and biodiversity enhancements, are considered sufficient for the planning assessment. If, however, further details are required for clarification, we are happy to provide any relevant additional information, if requested.