

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/00984/FUL	Bob Melling	25 th November 2025

Address: 2 Queens Road, Littleborough, OL15 8AX

Proposal: Change of use and conversion of existing office building (Use Class E) into 1-bedroom flat (Use Class C3) and associated works including alterations to fenestration and removal of security shutters and grilles and installation of cycle rack

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	Y

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	Y

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N/A
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N/A
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 05/12/2025

SITE

The application relates to no. 2 Queens Road, a single storey, detached property located within the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area. The property is a vacant office building that faces the highway to the northwest and is adjacent to nos. 65 and 61 Church Street and 17 Queens Road to the northwest. The ground floor of no. 61 is occupied by the Littleborough Post Office and the upper floors are occupied by two flats. No. 65 Church Street is currently vacant but was last used for commercial purposes. No. 17 Queens Road is a residential property and to the rear of the application property on James Hill Street is a large industrial unit occupied by 'AD Laser Cutting.' Queens Road is an unadopted, 90m stretch of highway which serves both residential and commercial properties.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the change of use from an office building (Class E) to a one-bedroom dwellinghouse (Class C3). Minimal external alterations are proposed such as the installation of a new entrance door, replacement uPVC windows and the removal of the existing security shutters and grilles. The internal layout of the building would be reconfigured to provide a bedroom, a bathroom, a store and an open plan kitchen, living and dining room. One off-street parking space would be provided to the side (southwest) of the building along with a cycle rack and bin storage.

The proposed dwelling would have a floor area of 44.3sqm with a double bedroom measuring 12.5sqm.

PLANS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED

Drawing No: Ex01. Revision A – Existing Plan
Drawing No: Ex04. Revision A – Existing Site Plan
Drawing No: P01. Revision A – Proposed Plan and Elevations
Drawing No: P02. Revision B – Location and Site Plan
Design & Access statement and Heritage Impact statement
Project No: 22488 – Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Enevo dated 15/09/2025

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE):

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-S1	Sustainable Development
JP-H3	Type, Size and Design of New Housing
JP-P1	Sustainable Places
JP-P2	Heritage
JP-C8	Transport Requirements of New Development

Local

Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

DM1	General Development requirements
SD1	Delivering sustainable development
SO2	Creating successful and healthy communities
C1	Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
C3	Delivering the right type of housing
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P2	Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3	Improving design of new development
SO4	Promoting a greener environment
G9	Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1	Defined Urban Area
G/S/1	Hierarchy and Role of Centres

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD (June 2016)

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

81/D12564 - Private Double Garage. Approved (July 1981)

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways

Summary: No objections.

Conservation and Heritage

Summary: No objections.

Environmental Health (Noise)

Summary: No objections to submitted Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) subject to implementation of mitigation measures prior to occupation.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to all surrounding properties, a site notice displayed on Morgan Street, and a notice published in the local newspaper. 1 letter of objection has been received raising the following concerns:

- Impact on character and aesthetic of the Conservation Area
- The development is unwanted

These concerns are material considerations and will be addressed in the following report.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area (saved UDP policy G/D/1) which expects new development, where possible and appropriate, to be concentrated in the urban area. Additionally, CS policy C1 seeks to provide the right amount of homes in the right places, with a specific focus on regenerating inner areas and town centres.

Chapter 5 of the NPPF seeks to deliver a sufficient supply of homes, with paragraph 61 setting out that *'the overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community'*. Paragraph 63 states *'within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.'*

The principle of a dwellinghouse in this highly sustainable location is considered to be acceptable given the existing mixture of both commercial and residential uses. The proposed dwelling would contribute towards housing requirements in the borough and would increase economic activity in the town centre through the conversion of a vacant building. As such the development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with other development management requirements, assessed below.

Accommodation Standards, Impact on Residential Amenity and Noise

Occupier Amenity

CS policy DM1 states that proposals need to demonstrate that they do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. Additionally, the NPPF advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

PfE policy JP-H3 requires all new dwellings to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS), which is a technical standards document produced by the Government to ensure internal space within new dwellings is sufficient. Table 1 sets out the minimum gross internal floor area requirements for new dwellings, across a varying number of bedrooms, persons and storeys.

The applicant has indicated that the proposal would constitute a one person dwelling with a gross internal floor area of 44.3sqm. However, the submitted ground floor plan clearly indicates that the bedroom could accommodate a double bed. Moreover, with a floor area of 12.5sqm, the bedroom would exceed the minimum floor area requirements outlined in the NDSS for two persons (11.5sqm). Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the building might, during its lifetime, be occupied by two persons.

When assessed as a one person dwelling, the unit would satisfy the minimum gross internal floor area requirement of 39sqm, however, when assessed as a two person dwelling, the unit would fall 7.7sqm short of the minimum gross internal floor area requirement of 50sqm. Given the size of the proposed bedroom and the fact that the

ground floor plan shows a double bed, it is considered necessary to evaluate the proposal as a two person dwelling. On this basis, the proposal would fall well below the NDSS gross internal floor area requirement and is considered to provide insufficient internal space, to the detriment of any future occupants and in conflict with PfE policy JP-H3.

PfE policy JP-P1 requires all new development to be comfortable and inviting with indoor and outdoor environments that offer a high level of amenity that minimises exposure to pollution and addresses microclimate issues such as sunlight and shade (inter alia).

The proposed dwelling would be enclosed by the large industrial unit to the south on James Hill Street and the adjacent two storey properties to the north on Church Street/Queens Road. It would have two main rooms accessed from a central hallway and these rooms would be served by windows facing northwest directly onto Queens Road. The window serving the main living area would directly face the rear elevation of no. 65 Church Street at a distance of approximately 4.99m while the bedroom window would measure approximately 5.12m to the front elevation of no. 17 Queens Road.

Section 4.1 of the 'Residential Development' SPD sets out the following minimum separation distances that should be applied to all new residential developments and developments which affect existing residential properties:

- (i) *21m between directly facing principal windows of habitable rooms, at an upper floor level AND 10.5m between a principal window at an upper floor level and a directly facing boundary of the curtilage;*
- (ii) *14m between a principal window and any directly facing two storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room;*
- (iii) *10m between a principal window and any directly facing single storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room.*

The proposal would fall significantly short of the above standards, and it is considered that any future occupants of the proposed dwelling would experience an oppressive, dark and uncomfortable indoor living environment that would not provide a satisfactory standard of amenity. This is made worse by the fact that all the windows face northwards.

The SPD does recognise that exceptions to the minimum space standards may be acceptable in some circumstances, for example where reduced distances would not detract from the general levels of privacy and amenity typical in the area, such as a town centre. However, as demonstrated, the proposal falls well below the minimum space standards, meaning it would not be reasonable to make an exception.

In addition, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would suffer from an unacceptable lack of privacy due to the first and second floor windows of the adjacent flats and the position of the windows at street level, directly adjacent to the highway. Given the site's town centre location, with several accesses to commercial and residential premises along the road, it is likely that there would be a moderate amount foot and vehicle traffic past the windows at various points during the day. This would significantly compromise the privacy of future occupants.

Paragraph 198 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. In this context, planning decisions should avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life. CS policy G9 also requires that new development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in noise pollution.

The application property is sited in close proximity to a number of retail and industrial uses and thus may be subject to potential noise impacts. A Noise Impact Assessment, which includes mitigation measures, has been submitted in support of the application. The Council's Environmental Health Officer was consulted and raised no objections to the proposed development subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures prior to occupation.

The proposed development would be provided with an outdoor amenity space; however, this is only adequate for car parking, cycle storage and bin storage. Due to the site's town centre location, it is acknowledged that there are other opportunities to access outdoor public amenity spaces.

Privacy and Overlooking/Overbearing Impacts

Given the position and location of the windows, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any overlooking effects that would be detrimental to the living conditions of the neighbouring residents. Moreover, no extensions to the existing building are proposed.

Noise Disturbance

The level of noise and disturbance from up to two additional residents is considered negligible within the existing context and would not give rise to any harm to local amenity.

Summary

While the proposal is not considered to unduly impact on the amenity of the occupants of existing residential properties, it would fail to provide an acceptable standard of amenity for any future occupants of the proposed dwelling by virtue of its non-compliance with PfE policies JP-H3 and JP-P1, CS policy DM1, section 4.1 of the SPD and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Impact on Character and Appearance

The application site is a single storey building located on Queens Road in the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area. It is constructed of brick, part of which has been rendered, and would appear to date from the late 20th century. Given its form, late date, and materials, it does not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. NPPF chapter 16, PfE policy JP-P2 and CS policy P2 also apply. Conservation Areas are key heritage assets for the purposes of CS policy P2. This policy seeks to conserve, enhance and promote these assets.

The proposal is for the conversion of the building into a single residential unit. The Council's Conservation Officer has raised no heritage objections to the principle of a residential use in this location. The main external alterations to the building are the installation of a new entrance door and the replacement of the existing windows. Details of which can be secured by condition.

No concerns are had regarding the design of the proposed cycle rack, which would not be considered a visually intrusive addition, and details of the proposed bin store can be secured by condition.

Subject to the relevant conditions, it is considered that the proposal would have a neutral impact on the significance of the Conservation Area.

Highways and Parking

CS policy DM1 requires development proposals to provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account the proposed use and location.

The application site is in a highly sustainable location in Littleborough Town Centre with local amenities and public transport provisions within walking distance. Notwithstanding, the submitted plans indicate the provision of one off-street parking space which would be adequate for the proposed use.

The Council's Highways Officer has advised that the change of use is unlikely to generate any problematic volume of traffic, and that sufficient off-street parking would be provided. The development would also provide space for cycles to be stored, enabling future occupants to utilise alternative modes of active travel.

Bin storage would be provided adjacent to the application property in a convenient location for future occupants. The Highways Officer has raised no objections regarding the servicing arrangements for the proposed use, which are expected to take place much the same as they do for neighbouring residential properties.

Taking the above matters into consideration and subject to relevant conditions, the proposed development is in accordance with CS policies DM1 and T2, PfE policy JP-C8 and the relevant requirements of the SPD and the NPPF.

Conclusion

It is acknowledged that the proposed development would make a contribution, albeit minor, to the borough's housing requirements in a sustainable, town centre location. However, it is not considered that this minor contribution to housing supply would outweigh the identified harm regarding occupier amenity. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal should be evaluated as a two person dwelling, and, on this basis, it would not comply with the NDSS, as required by PfE policy JP-H3, The lack of sufficient internal space is compounded by the failure to comply with the minimum separation distances outlined in the SPD. The proposed windows would be overlooked by facing residential properties and would suffer from an unacceptably poor provision of natural light and outlook, and the indoor living environment would feel oppressive and uncomfortable as a result. In addition, the proposed windows would directly overlook the road, with passersby able to see into the property at a close range. This would further reduce the sense of privacy for future occupants. On this basis, the proposal would fail to comply with the Development Plan including other relevant material considerations, and it is recommended that permission is refused.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reason:

1. By reason of its internal layout and limited size, which falls below the relevant Nationally Described Space Standard, the proposed dwelling would fail to provide a satisfactory standard of amenity for future occupants. Furthermore, by virtue of its relationship with the adjacent properties, the standard of accommodation would be undermined through an unsatisfactory outlook, a lack of sufficient natural light and a loss of privacy by way of overlooking from nearby residential properties. Lastly, the positioning of the windows at street level would further undermine the privacy of future occupants with passersby able to see directly into the accommodation. As a result, the proposals would fail to comply with the requirements of the Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document, Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-H3 and JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Procedure Statement

The proposal would not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area nor does it comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There were no amendments to the scheme, or conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which could have made the development acceptable and it was therefore not possible to approve the application.

Notes for Applicant

1. For the avoidance of doubt, this decision relates to the following plans and supporting documents:
 - Drawing No: Ex01. Revision A – Existing Plan
 - Drawing No: Ex04. Revision A – Existing Site Plan
 - Drawing No: P01. Revision A – Proposed Plan and Elevations
 - Drawing No: P02. Revision B – Location and Site Plan
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