

Residential Amenity Impact Statement

Proposed Conversion of Vacant First Floor Storage Accommodation to House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

First Floor Premises, 2 Miall Street, Rochdale

1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the conversion of vacant first-floor storage accommodation above existing ground-floor takeaway premises to form a five-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

The proposal seeks to bring a currently underutilised upper floor into beneficial residential use whilst making efficient use of an existing town-centre building. No alterations are proposed to the external appearance of the property and the development does not result in any intensification of the existing ground-floor commercial uses.

This statement specifically addresses potential concerns regarding the relationship between the proposed residential accommodation and the established takeaway uses operating at ground-floor level.

2. Existing Situation

The ground floor of the building is occupied by two established takeaway food businesses which have operated from the premises for a considerable period. The first-floor accommodation currently comprises vacant storage space and has no residential use.

The proposed development does not alter the operation, floor area, opening hours or customer capacity of either takeaway unit. Consequently, any impacts associated with the commercial premises already exist independently of the proposed development.

The application therefore focuses on ensuring that future occupiers of the HMO are provided with an acceptable standard of residential amenity through appropriate mitigation measures.

3. Noise and Disturbance Associated with Late-Night Trading

It is acknowledged that takeaway premises can generate noise associated with customer activity, vehicle arrivals and departures, delivery collections and general late-evening trading.

However, the site is located within an established mixed-use commercial environment where residential and commercial uses coexist. Future occupants would be aware that they are choosing to live within a town-centre location above existing commercial premises.

To ensure satisfactory internal living conditions are achieved, it is recommended that:

- All bedroom windows facing Milkstone Road and any elevations affected by commercial activity should be fitted with acoustically enhanced double-glazed units.
- The glazing specification should achieve a minimum weighted sound reduction performance of approximately $R_w + C_{tr} 40$ dB.
- Window frames should incorporate high-performance acoustic seals.
- Background ventilation should be provided through acoustically attenuated mechanical ventilation rather than reliance upon opening windows.

- Any new separating floors and walls between the commercial and residential accommodation should be upgraded where necessary to satisfy the sound insulation requirements of Approved Document E of the Building Regulations.

Subject to these measures, satisfactory internal noise levels can be achieved within bedrooms and communal living areas.

4. Odour and Fumes from Existing Extraction Systems

The principal amenity concern associated with living above takeaway premises is the potential transmission of cooking odours and grease-laden air.

The applicant acknowledges that the existing extraction arrangements serving the takeaway units should be reviewed and, where necessary, upgraded to ensure compatibility with the proposed residential use.

It is recommended that:

- Existing extraction systems serving the takeaway premises are inspected by a suitably qualified ventilation engineer.
- Any extract discharge points terminating close to first-floor windows are repositioned or extended where necessary.
- Flues should discharge at a level at least 1 metre above the eaves or roof ridge of the building, or otherwise in accordance with current DEFRA and industry guidance relating to commercial kitchen extraction.
- Grease filtration and odour control measures should be upgraded where required.
- Carbon filtration, electrostatic precipitation or equivalent odour-abatement technology should be incorporated where necessary to minimise cooking odours affecting the residential accommodation.
- A maintenance programme should be implemented to ensure ongoing effectiveness of filters and extraction equipment.

These measures would significantly reduce the likelihood of cooking odours affecting future residents.

5. Plant Equipment, Flues and Vibration

Commercial kitchen extraction systems can generate both airborne noise and structure-borne vibration.

To ensure that future occupants are protected from these effects, it is recommended that:

- Existing extraction fans, condensers and associated plant are subject to an acoustic assessment.
- All plant equipment is mounted on anti-vibration supports.
- Ductwork connections incorporate flexible anti-vibration joints.
- Any replacement or upgraded plant should achieve a rating level at least 5 dB below the existing background sound level when assessed at the nearest residential window.

- Any tonal, impulsive or intermittent noise characteristics should be appropriately mitigated.

Implementation of these measures would ensure that noise and vibration from mechanical plant remain at acceptable levels.

6. General Activity Associated with Takeaway Uses

The takeaway premises generate a degree of customer movement and activity throughout their operating hours.

The proposal does not increase such activity and does not alter the operation of either commercial unit. The development merely introduces a residential use to the existing first floor.

Given the town-centre location and mixed-use character of the area, the level of activity associated with the takeaways is considered characteristic of the surrounding environment. With the acoustic and ventilation mitigation measures outlined above, future occupiers would enjoy a satisfactory standard of residential amenity.

7. Mechanical Ventilation Strategy for the HMO

To minimise reliance upon opening windows, all bedrooms and communal areas should be provided with a whole-building mechanical ventilation system.

The preferred solution would comprise:

- A continuous Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) system serving all habitable rooms.
- Supply air delivered directly to bedrooms and communal living areas.
- Extract air removed from kitchens, shower rooms and WCs.
- Acoustic attenuators incorporated within ductwork.
- High-efficiency filtration to reduce ingress of external odours and airborne pollutants.
- User controls allowing occupants to regulate ventilation rates.

The provision of an MVHR system would allow windows to remain closed during periods of commercial activity whilst maintaining good indoor air quality and thermal comfort.

8. Recommended Planning Conditions

The applicant would accept appropriately worded planning conditions requiring:

1. Submission and approval of an acoustic insulation scheme for the HMO prior to occupation.
2. Installation of acoustic glazing to all affected bedroom windows.
3. Installation and retention of a whole-building mechanical ventilation/MVHR system.
4. Submission and approval of details of odour-control measures associated with the existing takeaway extraction systems.
5. Submission and approval of details of any replacement or upgraded extraction plant, including noise and vibration mitigation measures.

6. Completion of all approved mitigation works prior to first occupation of the HMO and retention thereafter.

9. Conclusion

The proposed development represents the beneficial reuse of vacant first-floor accommodation within an existing mixed-use building. The proposal does not intensify the established takeaway uses and introduces no external alterations to the property.

Potential amenity impacts arising from noise, odour, extraction equipment and general commercial activity can be effectively mitigated through acoustic glazing, enhanced sound insulation, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and improvements to existing extraction systems.

Subject to the implementation of these measures and the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposed HMO can provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future occupants whilst coexisting successfully with the established ground-floor takeaway businesses.

This statement should align well with typical concerns raised by Rochdale's Environmental Health and Planning Officers and provides a clear basis for planning conditions rather than requiring all technical details to be submitted at the application stage.

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June 2026