

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Change of Use: Former Office Building to 21 Self-Contained Apartments Site: St James Place, Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 2LD

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a full planning application for the change of use and conversion of the former office building at St James Place, Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, into 21 self-contained residential apartments (a mix of one- and two-bedroom units).

The building has been vacant for approximately eight years and is in need of investment and reuse. The proposed scheme will bring the property back into productive use, provide much-needed housing in a sustainable location, and contribute positively to the vitality and regeneration of Rochdale town centre.

2. Site Context

The site is located on Yorkshire Street, within Rochdale town centre. The surrounding area is a mix of commercial, residential, retail and service uses, typical of an urban centre environment.

Key features:

- Three-storey office building (ground, first and second floors).
- Four principal entrances from Yorkshire Street.
- Two fire exits to Pagan Street.
- Enclosed ground floor car park with shuttered access.
- Town centre location with excellent public transport.

Refer to Site Location Plan

3. Design Principles

- Reuse of an existing building with minimal alteration to its external appearance.
- High-quality, functional residential units that meet modern housing standards.
- Retention of access points to front of building.
- Respect for the character of Yorkshire Street.
- Maximisation of sustainable, central urban living.

4. Use

Existing: Vacant office (former B1 use).

Proposed: Residential (C3 use) comprising 21 self-contained apartments.

This supports housing delivery and town centre regeneration objectives.

5. Amount

- 21 units total: a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments.
- 4 No 2 bedroom flats and 17 No 1 bedroom flats
- No change to building footprint.
- Internal reconfiguration.

6. Layout

- Apartments arranged either side of existing stairwells.
- Each unit includes living/kitchen/dining space, bedroom(s) and bathroom.
- 2 No Bin / cycle stores provided on ground floor accessed by shutters from exterior and by internal door for residents

Refer to Proposed Floor Plans : BL 23 003 – Proposed Floor Plans

7. Scale

- No changes to the building's external dimensions, height or massing.
- Alterations to rear elevation include removing large shutters and replacing with smaller shutters to bin store and new windows to ground floor flats. New windows to match existing.

Refer to Existing Elevations : BL 23 002– Existing Elevations

Refer to Proposed Elevations : BL 23 004 – Proposed Elevations

8. Appearance

- External appearance remains largely unchanged to front.
- Minor refurbishment and maintenance works only to front.
- Alteration to rear elevations design to be in keeping with existing building and street.
- Neutral impact on the street scene and surrounding area.

Refer to Proposed Elevations : BL 23 004 – Proposed Elevations

9. Landscaping

- No new landscaping proposed due to urban setting.
- Existing hardstanding and access routes retained.

Refer to Site Layout : BL 23 005 - Existing and Proposed Site Layout

10. Access

- Vehicular access retained from Yorkshire Street – No car parking on the site
- Pedestrian access via Yorkshire Street (main) and Pagan Street (secondary).
- Excellent public transport links (bus and rail).
- Inclusive design principles embedded in layouts and circulation.

11. Policy Context

- **NPPF:** Supports re-use of brownfield land, sustainable housing delivery, and town centre regeneration.
- **Rochdale Local Plan / Town Centre Strategy:** Encourages residential uses within the town centre, reuse of vacant buildings, and increased resident population to support economic vitality.

The proposal is fully aligned with these policies.

12. Conclusion

The proposed conversion of the former office building at St James Place into 21 self-contained apartments is a sustainable, policy-compliant development.

The scheme will:

- Deliver new housing in line with local and national priorities.
- Reuse a vacant, underutilised building.
- Minimise external alterations and preserve the character of Yorkshire Street.
- Support Rochdale town centre regeneration.