



CAROLINE TAMWORTH PLANNING

Planning and Design Consultancy

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF DWELLING (PLANNING USE CLASS C3) TO 6
BED HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (PLANNING USE CLASS C4)
RETROSPECTIVE**

1 SPENCER AVENUE, MANCHESTER, M16 0AW

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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On Behalf Of

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CT1018

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1.0 The Site

1.1 The application comprises a red brick three storey end of terrace property on Spencer Avenue, which is located to the south east of the Firswood area of South Manchester. The dwelling has an enclosed forecourt to the Spencer Avenue frontage and an enclosed rear garden area.

1.2 An alleyway runs along the northern boundary of the site, behind the properties on Clarendon Road. An alleyway serving the rear garden areas of No's 1 - 21 Spencer Avenue and No's 2 -22 Westminster Avenue also runs along the eastern boundary.

1.3 The surrounding properties are predominantly residential in character. However, there is a parade of commercial units to the north on Clarendon Road.

1.4 A site location plan is provided.

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 The application seeks retrospective consent for the change of use of the building to a House in Multiple Occupation.

2.2 The accommodation to be provided includes a kitchen and two living/dining rooms to the ground floor, three bedrooms and a bathroom to the first floor and three bedrooms and a bathroom to the second floor.

2.3 Access to the rear garden area will be provided both from the kitchen and via patio doors in the living/dining room.

2.4 There are no external alterations proposed.

3.0 Background

3.1 The works to the property were commenced in January 2017 and completed in June 2019. The applicant has invested considerable time and finances into the project and was unaware of the Article 4 Direction in place that means planning permission for the change of use was required.

3.2 In recent months, the applicant has corresponded with various departments of the Council about the matter and in response has submitted this retrospective application, in order to regularise the situation.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 The site falls within South Manchester on the Core Strategy Development Plan Proposals Map but is unallocated for any primary purpose.

4.2 The following Core Strategy policies are relevant:-

- Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles
- Policy H6 - South Manchester
- Policy H11 - Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Policy DM1 - Development Management
- Policy T2 - Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need

4.3 Advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also relevant.

Policy SP1

4.4 Policy SP1 promotes the creation of neighbourhoods of choice with high quality development focussed within district centres. There is an emphasis on accessibility, in particular walking, cycling and public transport and improving sustainable access to jobs, services and education.

4.5 The site is located close to the local shopping parade on Clarendon Road and there is good access to community facilities, places of employment and areas of recreational open space. In line with local and national policy, the site is well connected to public transport and walking and cycling are also feasible modes of transport.

Core Strategy Policies H6, T2 & DM1

4.6 Whilst it is acknowledged that policy H6 seeks to increase the choice of housing available within South Manchester by adding to the stock of larger homes, this should not mean that all future proposals for housing within that area must be solely for this type of dwelling. The policy recognises that there is still a need for higher density and affordable housing development in the area.

4.7 The site is in a highly sustainable location with excellent access to local shops and services, places of employment and public transport. Whilst the site does not fall within a district centre, it is very close to a local shopping parade and less than 1km away from Whalley Range district centre.

4.8 The proposed development will provide newly refurbished accommodation for single or small households who require shared accommodation within an accessible location.

4.9 In terms of design, the proposed change of use does not require any external alterations to the building and it will retain its residential character. As such, there will be no adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The continued residential use of the site will not have an adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding residents or pose any conflict with surrounding land users in terms of privacy and noise.

4.10 Whilst there is no off-street parking provided, there should be no highway safety concerns as the proposed use is unlikely to generate a significant demand for car parking spaces on Spencer Avenue. The accessible location of the site means that future occupants are unlikely to rely upon the use of a car for travel and therefore levels of traffic generation associated with the use will be minimal.

4.11 In line with the provisions of policy DM1, the layout of the internal accommodation and floor areas of the rooms are compliant with guidance contained within the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Guidance and Amenity Standards document. Private amenity space, of a size and type consistent with the likely demand for usage, is available within the rear garden area. Details of refuse storage and collection will be provided in response to an appropriate condition. However, the existing domestic storage arrangements will be sufficient to serve the HMO use and the bins will be collected in accordance with the Council's collection rota.

Policy H11

4.12 Having checked the Council's list of licensed rented homes, there are three addresses that are listed within the 'M16 0' postcode area; 128 Egerton Road North, 181 Clarendon Road and 20 Milton Grove.

4.13 A wider search for the 'M16' postcode area showed a total of 31 licensed rented homes; 24 within the 'M16 8' postcode area, 4 within the 'M16 7' postcode area and the 3 mentioned above in the 'M16 0' postcode area.

4.14 Whilst it is acknowledged that not all HMOs within Manchester are known and registered, the above figures do suggest that there is not currently an over-concentration of HMO accommodation within the area surrounding the application site. As such, the proposed change of use will not lead to an unacceptable level of concentration of HMOs within the area and thereby protect the balanced and mixed residential character of the area. Paragraph 9.48 states that sustainable communities must provide opportunity for a mix of households and the proposal is considered to contribute towards this aim.

4.15 An article by the Guardian in March 2018 reported concerns that Manchester was not providing enough affordable housing; instead focussing on the provision of larger housing developments that provided little or no affordable housing. The article highlighted that:-

“In Manchester, none of the 14,667 homes in big developments granted planning permission by the council’s planning committee in the last two years [2016-2018] are set to be “affordable”, planning documents show – in direct contravention of its own rules, and leading to worries that London’s affordable housing crisis is spreading.”

4.16 The article went on to say:-

“Manchester city council said there are already 68,000 social rented properties in the city – a third of the housing stock, compared with the national average of 16%. Despite this, more than 12,900 people are waiting for a house on Manchester’s social housing register.”

4.17 Councillor John Leech reported at the time of the article that:-

“It is not beyond the realm of probability that key workers will struggle to rent property in [south Manchester suburbs] Didsbury and Chorlton and in the city centre.”

4.18 In May 2019 the average cost of a property in Manchester was reported to be just under £170,000. This is simply not affordable for many, forcing people who have been born and bred in the area, and who may have valuable key worker skills, to move away.

4.19 An article by The Northern Quarter in October 2019 confirmed that the situation has not improved with research showing that Manchester faced a dire shortage of affordable homes and accommodation.

4.20 The most recent annual State of the City report (October 2019) showed that increasing homelessness and people sleeping rough remains an ongoing challenge for Manchester.

4.21 The Our Manchester Strategy sets out a long-term vision for Manchester’s future over the period 2016 – 2025 and strives to provide ‘a diverse supply of good-quality housing affordable to everyone’. The report confirms that in October 2019 there were over 11,000 new homes under construction in Manchester. However, 9,000 of these were in the city centre and highly unlikely to be affordable to a large proportion of Manchester’s population. The ongoing Covid-19 situation has also placed additional financial strain on many individuals, making the immediate availability of quality affordable accommodation even more vital.

4.22 The above evidence clearly suggests that the continued provision of HMO accommodation is essential in ensuring that all sectors of Manchester’s population are able to access suitable and affordable accommodation.

4.23 Spencer Avenue appears to be dominated by family housing which will ensure that the Council’s strategy to retain a predominance of family accommodation with the area, in order to support a range of local facilities, including schools, will not be undermined.

4.24 Policy H11 states that:-

“In cases where the concentration of such properties is significant but less high, the Council will examine property type and resident mix in more detail when considering an application for a change of use.”

4.25 As there is an absence of evidence to suggest that there is a significant concentration of HMO properties within the area, this is all the more reason for the Council to assess the application on its merits.

4.26 In view of the above, the proposed change of use of the dwelling to HMO accommodation is considered to be appropriate when assessed against the wider context of Manchester’s housing situation.

5.0 Design

Use/Amount/Size

5.1 The proposal involves the provision of a House in Multiple Occupation containing 6 bedrooms.

Layout, Scale & Appearance

5.2 The existing layout, scale and appearance of the building will not alter as a result of the proposed development.

Landscaping

5.3 The existing landscaping will be retained.

6.0 Access

6.1 The existing access arrangements will be utilised. The proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the free flow of traffic along the highway or pedestrian safety. The site is well served by public transport and walking and cycling are feasible modes of transport.

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