Planning Statement

2. No Apartments above shops at 918 Stockport Road, Levenshulme

INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement is to support an application seeking planning permission 3 No. apartments on the first floor above 918 Stockport Road, Levenshulme.

This Planning Statement comprises an assessment of the proposed development against the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework which was revised in December 2024 and the Manchester Core Strategy that was adopted in 2012.

The purpose of this statement is to describe the relevant national and local policies that are directly relevant to the application and to provide an analysis of those policies and the application site.

SITE LOCATION/CONTEXT

The site is located on Stockport Road in the heart of Levenshulme. The property is a commercial building with an Estate Agent on the ground floor. The site is predominantly commercial along Stockport Road with terraced houses located behind Stockport Road in a grid iron street pattern. There is an existing car park at the rear of the site but no on-street parking available outside the site on Stockport Road or the adjacent side street of Albert Road.



Figure 1 – Street view of Edward Mellor Estate Agents on Stockport Road.

SITE CONSTRAINTS

Coal Mining Risk

The site is not located within a Coal Mining Risk Area and therefore a coal risk assessment is not required.

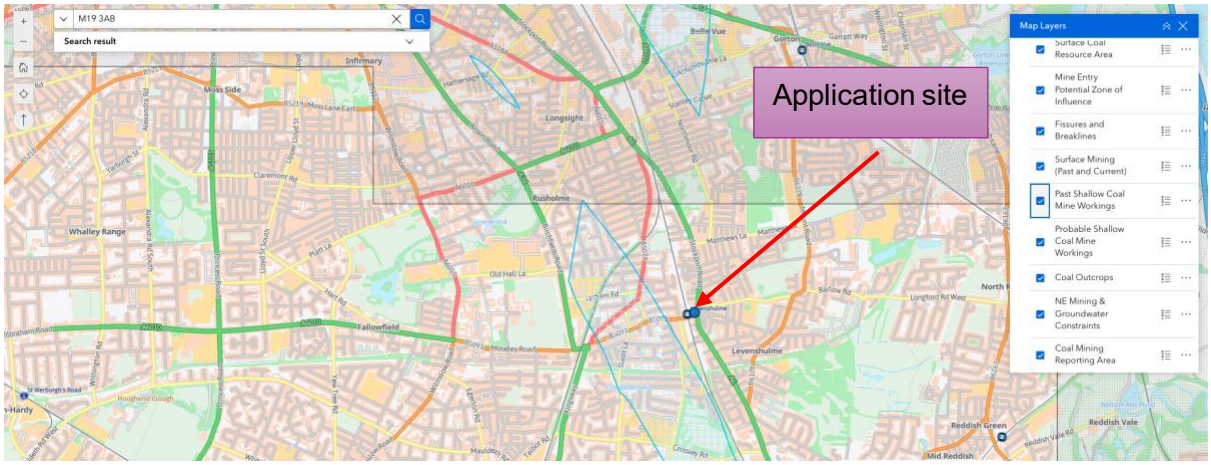


Fig 3 – Coal Mining Map

Flood Risk

The site is within a Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency records which means that there is a low probability of flooding (1:1000). As the development site is smaller than 1 hectare and not affected by other sources of flooding then a Flood Risk Assessment is not required. Figure 4 on the following page shows the flood risk map extract from the Environment Agency records.

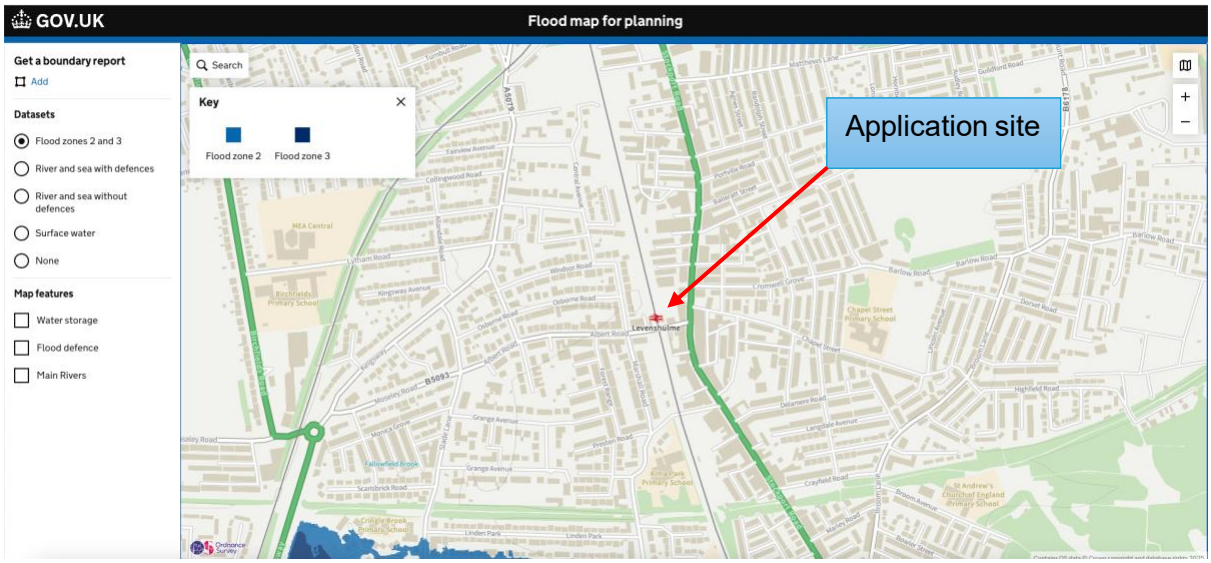


Fig 4 – Flood Risk Map

Heritage

The buildings on the site are not heritage assets nor considered ss non-designated heritage assets.

Trees

The site is not subject to any Tree Preservation Orders.

Public Rights of Way

The land does not contain or affect any public rights of way that are a material consideration in respect of the determination of this proposal.

Ecology and Biodiversity

There are no known ecology or biodiversity related concerns on the site that are a material consideration in respect of the determination of this proposal.

Local Plan Policy

Manchester Core Strategy shows the application site as being unallocated in the adopted Local Plan but within a Major Road Rail Environment Improvement Corridor

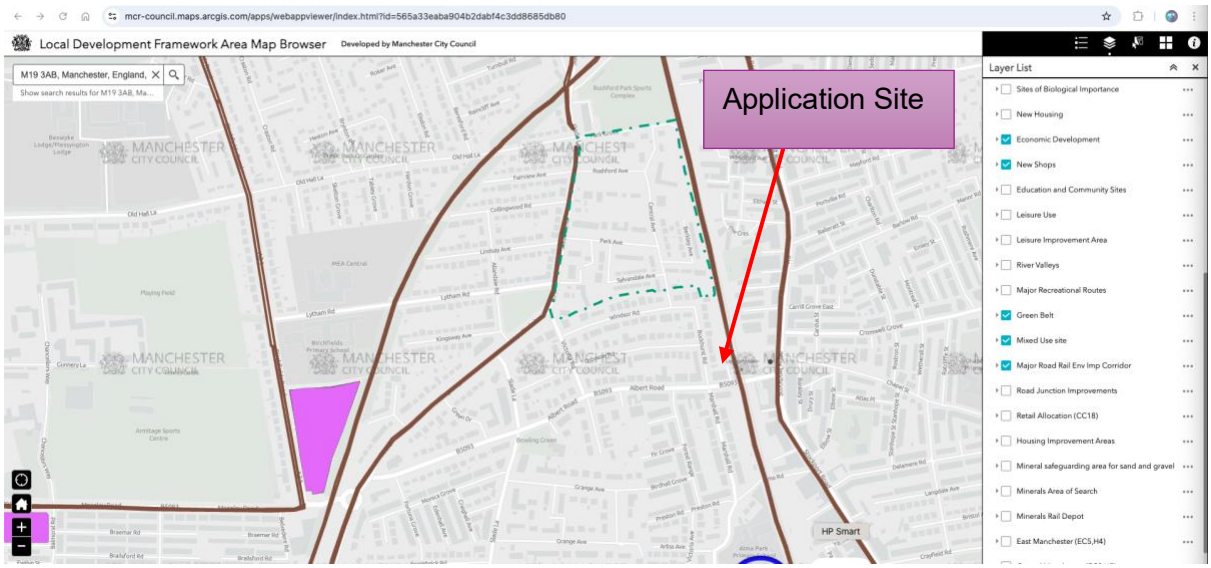


Fig 5 – Planning allocation map.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Core Strategy was adopted in 2012 and is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework (LDF). It sets out the long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester. A number of Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents. The adopted Core Strategy contains Strategic Spatial Objectives that form the basis of its policies, as follows:

SO1. Spatial Principles – The development of this highly accessible site would support sustainable growth and help to halt climate change. It would use previously developed land and improve access to jobs, services and education, close to all sustainable forms of transport and reduce the need to travel. It would be adaptable and resilient to climate change and help to reduce carbon emissions through its lifecycle.

SO2. Economy – The scheme would provide jobs during construction in a highly accessible location and the homes would be near to jobs and support economic growth, reduce economic, environmental and social disparities, and help to create inclusive sustainable communities.

S03 Housing – These 3 apartments in a highly accessible location would meet demand for housing near to jobs. It would address demographic needs and support economic growth, which requires housing to provide an attractive place for prospective workers to live and allow them to contribute positively to the economy.

S06. Environment – The proposal would be adaptable to climate change in terms of design, layout, siting and function of the building.

Policy SP 1 Spatial Principles – The proposal would be highly sustainable and provide high quality homes close to economic and commercial development. It would: be close to sustainable transport running along Reddish Lane and maximise use of the City's transport infrastructure; would enhance the built and natural environment; re-use previously developed land (in this case the upper floors of a building).

Policy CC3 Housing – New homes are required in Greater Manchester. The development would be located in an area suitable for residential development and would contribute to meeting the City Centre Core Strategy housing targets.

Policy CC9 Design and Heritage – The design would be appropriate to the site's context. It would have an impact on the character and appearance of the Reddish Lane.

Policy CC10 A Place for Everyone – The apartments would appeal to single professionals, older singles and couples. The building and site would be accessible.

Policy H1 Overall Housing Provision - The proposal would provide apartments consistent with regeneration objectives, and help to create a mixed community with commercial units on the ground floor with residential above.

Policy T1 Sustainable Transport – The proposal would encourage a modal shift to more sustainable alternatives by providing 3 apartments in a highly sustainable location close to jobs services and other facilities, close to all modes of public transport. It would improve pedestrian routes and the pedestrian environment.

Policy T2 Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need –The proposal would be accessible by a variety of sustainable transport modes and would help to connect residents to jobs, local facilities and open space.

Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas - The proposal involves little changes to the elevations, which will remain unaltered and consequently the design responds positively at street level and would improve legibility.

Policy DM 1 Development Management – This policy sets out the requirements for developments and outlines a range of general issues that all development should have regard to. Of these the following issues are or relevance to this proposal:

• appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail;

• design for health;

• adequacy of internal accommodation and amenity space.

• impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development;

• development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area;

• effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality and road safety and traffic generation;

• accessibility to buildings, neighbourhoods and sustainable transport modes;

• impact on safety, crime prevention and health; adequacy of internal accommodation, external amenity space, refuse storage and collection, vehicular access and car parking; and

• impact on biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage, green Infrastructure and flood risk and drainage.

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies

DC26.1 and DC26.5 Development and Noise – The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of surrounding occupiers through noise. Attenuation would be needed to protect the amenity of residents within the proposed building from external noise sources. This can be dealt with under Building Regulations.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Government guidance is set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated December 2024. The NPPF expresses a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of the application. The Planning Practice Guide (PPG) is intended to complement the NPPF and to provide a single resource for planning guidance, whilst rationalizing and streamlining the material. Almost all previous planning Circulars and advice notes have been cancelled. Specific reference will be made to the PPG or other national advice in this Planning statement, where appropriate.

The following sections of the NPPF are considered of most relevance to the application proposal: -

- Chapter 2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 4 – Decision Making
- Chapter 6: - Building a strong, competitive economy
- Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land
- Chapter 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places

Paragraph 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

Paragraph 11 states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (as per section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). However, where the development plan is absent, silent or

out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protects areas or assets of particular importance, provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Chapter 4 (Decision-making) of the NPPF confirms that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) advises that Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 125 in Chapter 11 (Making effective use of land) mentions that Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places) advocates a requirement for good design. This is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Chapter 12 advises that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The revisions to the NPPF in July 2021 establish very clearly that development which is not well designed should be refused, and conversely, significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design.

The December 2024 revisions cemented the role of beauty in placemaking and the planning system, with Chapter 12 now seeking to achieve well-designed and beautiful places (author emphasis).

In support of this, the Government has produced a suite of guidance documents including Building for a Healthy Life (BHL), the National Model Design Code (NMDC) and the National Design Guide (NDG) which form a material consideration in the assessment of the design of development proposals, and aid Local Authorities and developers alike in understanding if development proposals are well-designed.

Places for Everyone (PfE)

Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development

Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy

Policy JP-S4: Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth

Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Policy JP-P6: Health

Policy JP-C1: An Integrated Network

Policy JP-C2: Digital Connectivity

Policy JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development

THE PROPOSED PLANNING APPLICATION

The planning application seeks to convert the upper floor of the Estate Agent into 2no. apartments.

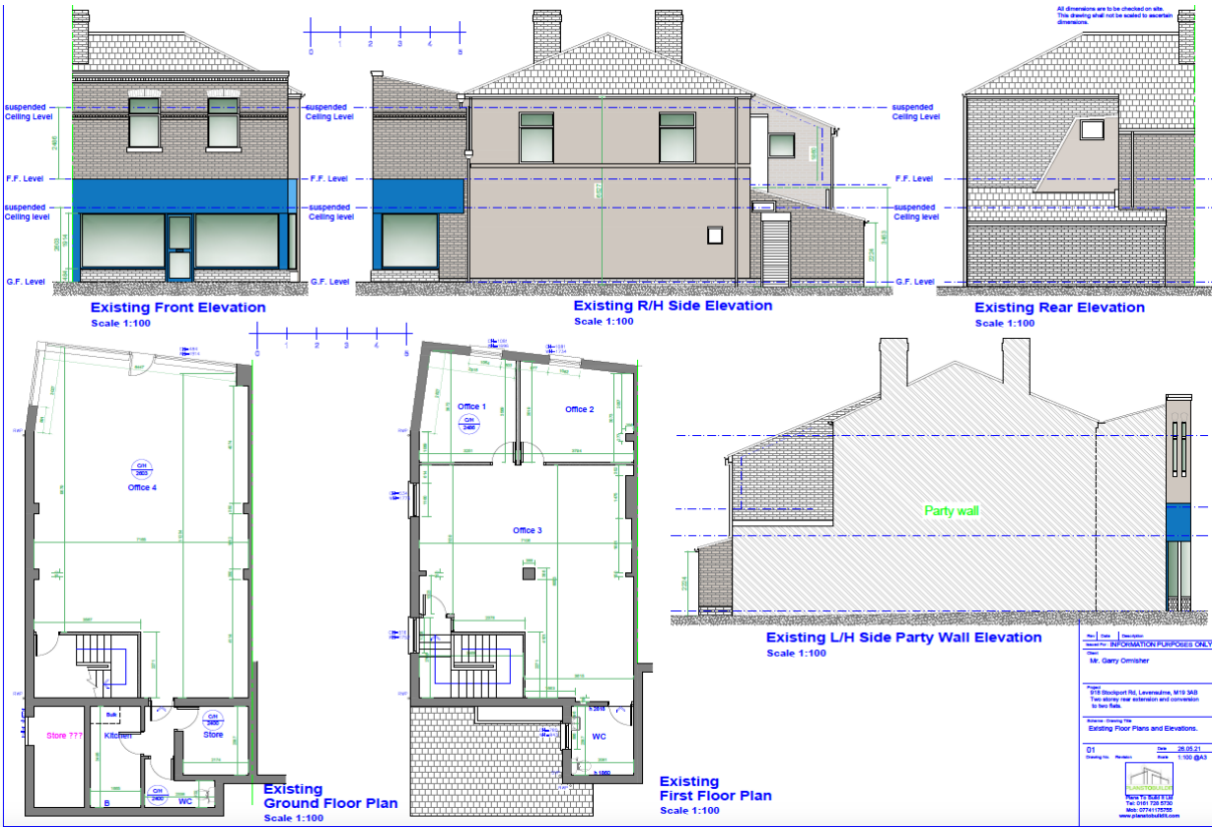


Figure 6 – Existing elevations and floor plans

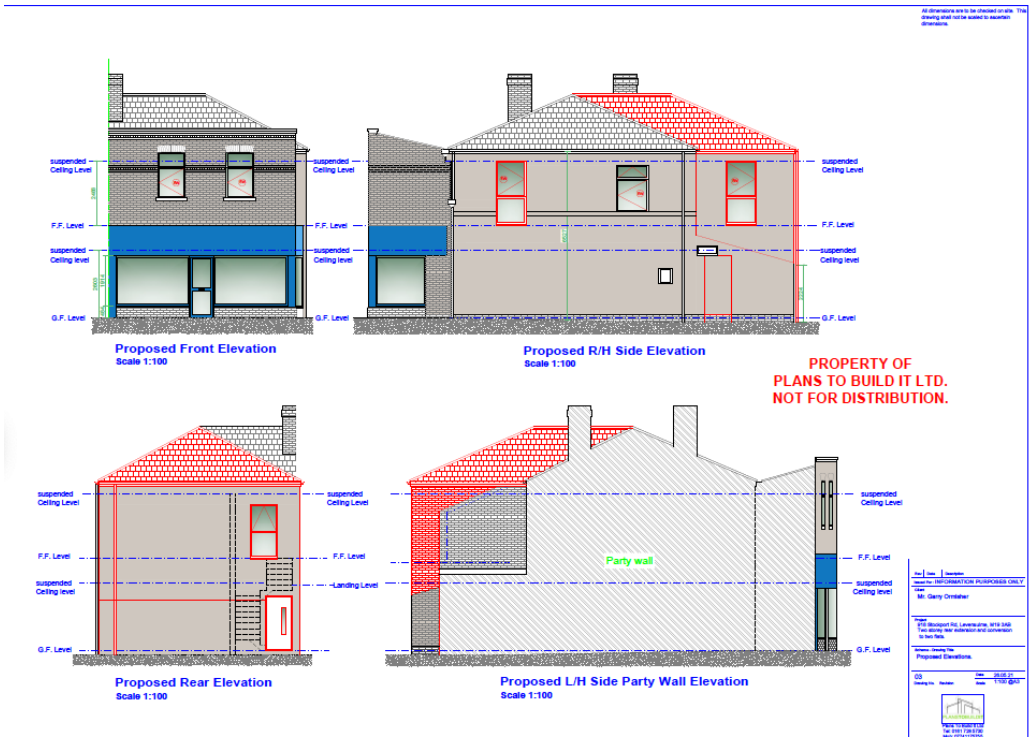


Figure 7 – Proposed elevations

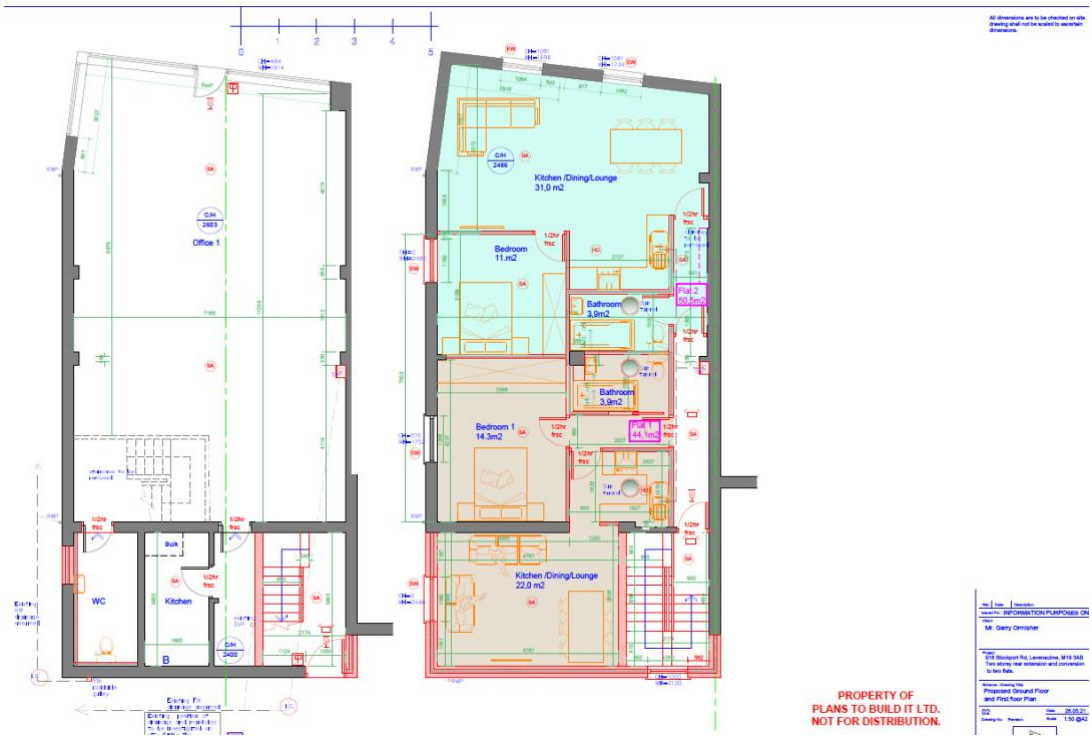


Figure 8 – Proposed Floor Plans

Planning considerations

The key planning issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

i) Principle of development

ii) Impact upon Visual Amenity of the area

iii) Design Considerations

iv) Impact on Residential Amenity

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this section is to provide a justification for the proposed development within the policy context of the Manchester Core Strategy and the material considerations of the NPPF.

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. One of the core planning principles is the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed. The site currently accommodates Edward Mellor Estate Agents on the ground floor which provides an Estate Agent service. The upper floors of the building were last used as offices but are currently not used. Bringing redundant floor space back into usable space is considered sustainable and reduces the need to release green belt for additional homes.

Impact upon the Visual Amenity of the area

The functional design and appearance of the existing building is to remain unaltered and will therefore carry the character of the existing streetscene. The plans include extending the existing building at the rear, however, this will also be seen from the side elevation.

The most prominent view will the rear elevation which currently has ad-hoc extensions including an outrigger and single storey rear extensions.



Figure 9 – Rear elevation of Edward Mellor's.

The proposed extension would provide a more consistently shaped elevation as well as containing a matching hipped roof. Consequently, the design of the property would be more consistent and this would improve the aesthetics of the area.

IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The existing Edward Mellor building is located in a localised town centre on the primary carriageway running through (Stockport Road). There are no properties that operate a 24-hour service that would likely affect the occupiers of the proposed flats and traffic generated traffic noise could be controlled via Building Regulations.

For the above-mentioned reasons, we consider the proposed apartments in the upper floors of the building is in scale and keeping with the character of the area and is appropriate to its surroundings in terms of siting, design, density, materials, and external appearance.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Policy JP-C2 of PfE supports high quality digital infrastructure and requires new development to have full fibre to premises connections, operational internet and accessibility to network providers unless technically infeasible or unviable.

The site is well connected to mains services, infrastructure, neighbouring developments and road networks.

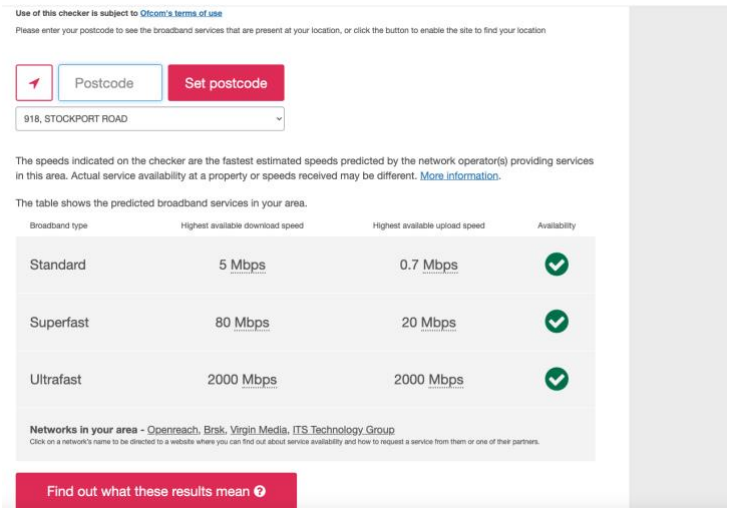


Figure 10 – Confirmation that High Speed Broadband can be supplied.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, this requires planning applications that accord with the development plan to be approved without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date granting permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the framework as a whole or specific policies in the framework indicate that development should be restricted.

The focus of the National Planning Policy Framework focus is significantly boosting the supply of housing and local planning authorities are tasked with identifying sufficient land for housing and maintaining an adequate supply of housing land and ensuring the delivery of housing.

On balance we consider the benefits of providing two new flats in a sustainable town centre location clearly outweighs any dis-benefits and the proposal conforms with both national and local planning guidance and therefore represents sustainable development.

For these reasons, we believe that planning permission should be granted.