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Supporting Statement for Prior Approval Application
Change of Use from Office (Class E) to Two Self-Contained Studio Flats (Class C3)
255 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 5LW

This application seeks prior approval for the change of use of the first floor at 255 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, from office use (Class E) to two self-contained studio flats (Class C3), in accordance with the provisions of Class MA of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 (as amended). The proposal is modest in scale and sensitive to its urban setting, representing a considered and appropriate response to both the building's existing layout and the surrounding context.

Site Context & Surroundings

The subject property is located within the Rusholme ward of Manchester, falling under the Manchester Rusholme parliamentary constituency and the jurisdiction of Manchester City Council. The area is distinctly urban, characterised by a high proportion of purpose-built flats (approximately 71% of housing stock), and a notable presence of social housing (circa 33% of household spaces, significantly above the national average).

Rusholme is a vibrant, diverse, and strategically located community, benefitting from excellent access to public transport, employment hubs, educational institutions, and Manchester's central business district. The demographic profile is youthful and cosmopolitan, reflecting a strong student and young professional presence — a dynamic that is well-suited to the form and function of the proposed studio accommodation.

Design Intent & Occupation Strategy

The application proposes the creation of two high-quality, self-contained studio units. These are not intended as HMOs or multi-occupancy flats, but as compact, efficient residences for single-person occupancy. The internal layout has been deliberately designed to reflect this — with no provision for multiple sleeping areas or partitioned bedrooms. Each unit will comprise a single open-plan space with a kitchenette and en-suite facilities, ensuring a high standard of living within a manageable footprint.

We acknowledge and appreciate the planning officer's concern regarding the enforceability of occupancy levels once planning permission is granted. In response, our client has committed to several control measures to ensure the development is delivered and operated in strict accordance with its intended use:

1. **Tenancy Agreement Clauses**
   Each unit will include clear clauses within the tenancy agreement explicitly restricting occupancy to single individuals. A copy of this can be provided to the local authority for their records.

2. **Purposeful Design**
   The internal layouts are tailored specifically for single-person occupation, with no capacity or subdivision to accommodate additional occupants.

3. **Willingness to Accept a Planning Condition**
   Our client is amenable to the imposition of a planning condition, where necessary, to reaffirm and secure the single-occupancy nature of these units.

These proactive measures offer a robust basis for managing and ensuring compliance with the proposed residential use, even beyond the planning stage. This also aligns with the council's wider objectives to prevent over-intensification, safeguard amenity, and maintain a balanced community demographic.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use fully complies with the criteria set out under Class MA of the GPDO. It represents a sustainable and policy-compliant re-use of existing urban floorspace, in a location with demonstrable demand for compact, single-person accommodation. The scheme addresses all relevant planning considerations and introduces a sensitive and enforceable model for occupation.

We trust the submitted package and the measures outlined herein demonstrate our commitment to a well-managed, high-quality residential conversion and respectfully request the officer's support in progressing the application towards a favourable outcome.

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