

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Change of Use: 3 bed flat to 3-bed, 3-person HMO

Address: 408 Barlow Moor Road, Manchester, M21 8AD

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Proposal

The proposal seeks planning approval for the change of use of an existing three bedroom self contained flat located above a commercial unit at 408 Barlow Moor Road (Use Class C3) to a three bedroom, three person House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4). The intention is to provide high quality, small scale shared accommodation that meets all relevant national and local HMO standards without altering the external appearance or character of the building.

2. Site Context and Existing Use

The property occupies the upper floors of a traditional mixed use terrace on Barlow Moor Road. The ground floor is in commercial use as a shop, and the flat above has **no internal connection** to the retail premises. This arrangement is consistent with the pattern of development along the street, where upper floor residential units sit above active ground floor uses.

The flat is accessed independently from the rear, via a dedicated entrance shared in form and character with other residential units along the terrace. A private rear yard provides space for secure cycle storage and refuse/recycling bins.

The existing accommodation comprises three bedrooms, a kitchen, a lounge, and a bathroom. The property is currently vacant and requires internal refurbishment.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal involves:

- Change of use from a C3 dwelling to a **C4 small HMO** for three unrelated individuals.
- **Internal refurbishment only**, with no external alterations.
- Installation of a **new en suite bathroom** to one of the second floor bedrooms.
- Reconfiguration and upgrading of internal finishes, fire safety measures, and services to meet HMO licensing standards.
- Retention of a **separate kitchen and lounge**, ensuring adequate communal space.
- All bedrooms exceeding **10 sqm**, meeting or surpassing Manchester City Council's minimum space standards.

There is **no loss of a family home**, as the flat is not currently occupied and is not part of a wider residential dwelling.

4. Design Considerations

Internal Layout

The internal layout has been designed to:

- Provide three well proportioned bedrooms suitable for single occupancy.
- Ensure adequate communal living space, including a dedicated kitchen and lounge.
- Improve amenity through the addition of an en suite to one bedroom.
- Enhance fire safety through upgraded doors, alarms, and compartmentation in line with HMO regulations.

No structural changes are proposed that would affect the building envelope or external appearance.

External Appearance

There are **no external works**. The proposal preserves:

- The existing façade and architectural character.
- The established pattern of mixed use development along Barlow Moor Road.
- The visual amenity of the street and surrounding area.

5. Access and Movement

Access to the Property

The flat benefits from **independent rear access**, entirely separate from the shop below. This arrangement ensures:

- Safe and convenient entry for residents.
- No conflict with commercial operations.
- Consistency with other flats in the terrace, maintaining the established access pattern.

Cycle and Refuse Storage

The rear yard provides:

- Secure, covered cycle storage for residents.
- Adequate space for refuse and recycling bins in accordance with council requirements.

This ensures sustainable transport options and proper waste management without impacting the public realm.

6. Compliance with HMO Standards

The proposal fully complies with:

- **National HMO standards**, including fire safety, amenities, and space requirements.
- **Manchester City Council's HMO guidance**, including minimum bedroom sizes, communal space provision, and sanitary facilities.
- Requirements for:
 - Fire detection and alarm systems
 - Fire resistant doors
 - Adequate kitchen facilities
 - Sufficient bathroom provision (one shared bathroom plus one en suite)

The property will be brought up to full licensing standards prior to occupation.

7. Impact on the Local Area

The development is expected to have **minimal impact** on the surrounding area:

- No external changes or intensification of built form.
- Low level residential use consistent with existing upper-floor flats.
- No loss of a family dwelling, as the unit is not currently in family occupation.
- Small scale HMO use (3 persons) that does not materially increase noise, traffic, or parking demand.
- Sustainable transport supported through cycle storage and proximity to public transport routes.

The proposal contributes positively to local housing choice by providing high quality accommodation for young professionals, key workers, or students.

8. Fire Safety and Precautions

A comprehensive package of fire safety upgrades will be implemented to ensure the proposed 3 bed, 3 person HMO fully complies with national fire safety legislation, Manchester City Council HMO standards, and relevant Building Regulations (notably Approved Document B).

Fire Doors and Compartmentation

To provide a protected escape route and adequate fire separation:

- **FD30 fire doors** will be installed to **all habitable rooms**, including bedrooms, kitchen, and lounge.
- **FD30S fire doors** (30 minute fire resistance with cold smoke seals) will be fitted to all rooms opening onto the escape route.

- All fire doors will include:
 - Integrated **smoke seals**
 - **Intumescent strips**
 - **Self closing devices**
- **Fire separation between the flat and the commercial unit below** will be upgraded to achieve **a minimum of 60 minutes fire resistance**, ensuring full compartmentation between uses.
- Additional **kitchen fire detection** measures will be installed to protect the escape route and adjacent rooms.

Fire Detection & Alarm System

A fully compliant **Grade A LD2 fire alarm system** will be installed, including:

- **Heat detector in the kitchen**
- **Smoke detectors** in:
 - Hallway
 - Staircase
 - Individual rooms
 - All circulation spaces forming the escape route
- Detectors will be **interlinked** to ensure simultaneous activation throughout the property.

This system meets HMO licensing requirements and provides early warning for all occupants.

Emergency Lighting

To ensure safe evacuation in low visibility conditions:

- **Emergency lighting** will be installed in:
 - Hallway
 - Staircase
 - Final exit route
- All fittings will include:
 - **3 hour battery backup**
 - Bulkhead or discreet LED units appropriate for residential settings

The system will comply with BS 5266.

Escape Route Protection

The escape route will be protected from all habitable rooms:

- The **staircase and hallway** will form a **protected escape route** from the second floor to the final exit, with escape windows in each bedroom.

The escape routes are as existing for the 3 bedroomed flat, however additional detection measures have been added including heat detectors and fire blankets in the kitchen. The cooker has been positioned furthest away from the final exit point.

- Fire resistant construction and FD30S doors will ensure the route remains tenable during evacuation.
- The escape route will remain protected, in line with Approved Document B.

Escape Windows

To provide secondary means of escape:

- Both **second floor bedrooms** will be fitted with **escape compliant windows**, meeting:
 - Minimum clear opening: 0.33 m²
 - Minimum dimension: 450 mm
 - Sill height: typically below 1100 mm

These windows provide an alternative escape option should the primary route become compromised.

Travel Distances

The internal layout has been assessed to ensure **travel distances comply** with HMO and Building Regulations guidance:

- Maximum travel distance to a protected route is within acceptable limits for a two storey HMO above ground floor commercial use.
- The protected stair enclosure ensures safe egress from all bedrooms.

9. Conclusion

The proposed change of use from a three bed flat to a three bed, three person HMO represents a modest, sustainable, and policy compliant enhancement of the existing residential accommodation.

With no external alterations, dedicated access, appropriate amenity provision, and full compliance with HMO standards, the development preserves the character of the area while contributing to local housing needs.