



Project 286: Design & Access Statement

Location	40 Estcourt Road, Watford, WD17 2PS
Proposal	Conversion and extension of C3 Dwelling to C4 House in Multiple Occupation.
Application Reference	PP-09593579
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Proposed development. 40 Estcourt Road viewed from Street

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

40 Estcourt Road, Watford WD17 2PS

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The applicant seeks full planning permission and conservation area consent for the change the use of an existing C3 Dwelling House to a C4 HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) at 40 Estcourt Road. The property is located in the Central Ward of Watford and is within the Estcourt Conservation Area. This proposed application includes a rear infill two-story extension.

The application follows on from Pre-Application 20/013545/PREAPP – Pre-Planning Advice Letter received on 11/01/2021, whereby the principle of conversion of the property to HMO use is accepted.

- 1.2 This Design & Access Statement is prepared to fulfil the statutory requirement for a planning application, of this type and scale. This statement provides written information to support the drawings and reports submitted as part of the application for change of use of existing residential dwelling to multiple occupation, extension, and refurbishment of existing property.
- 1.3 This statement draws together and presents the information prepared by the applicant's consultant team. This statement sets out the rational for the conversion of existing dwelling on the site, and to clarify and demonstrate due regard, and adherence, to the Estcourt Conservation Area character, and to the relevant national and local planning policies applicable to such a development.

- 1.4 Drawings and Documents Provided:

- 286-3-E001 – Site Location Plan - Existing
- 286-3-E002 – Site Block Plan – Existing - Proposed
- 286-3-E003 – Ground Floor Plan – Existing
- 286-3-E004 – Roof Plan – Existing
- 286-3-E005 – Front and Rear Elevations – Existing
- 286-3-E006 – Side Elevation – Existing
- 286-3-E007 – Sections – Existing
- 286-3-GA001 – Floor Plans - Proposed
- 286-3-GA002 – Roof Plan - Proposed
- 286-3-GA003 – Front and Rear Elevations – Proposed
- 286-3-GA004 – Side Elevation – Proposed
- 286-3-GA005 – Sections – Proposed
- 286-3- GA006 – 3D View - Proposed



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1.5 Supporting Report & Documents Provided:

- Flood Risk Assessment Report
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2.0 Site Description & Existing Use, & Context

2.1 Site Location and Description

Refer to Drawing 286-3-E001 and 286-3-E002 for Location Plan and Site Photographs.

Located in the Estcourt Conservation Area, 40 Estcourt Road is in the Hertfordshire town of Watford, near to the junction of Estcourt Road and Gartlet Road. The property is not listed and there are no immediately adjacent listed buildings. The property is subject to an Article 4 direction which removes permitted development rights for works including extensions, replacement windows and doors and removal of the front boundary walls.

The site is located on the east side of the street and direct accessed from Estcourt Road. The building is a standalone element with open parking to the left (north) and abutting St. John's Parish Halls to the right (south).

The front of the property has a small hardstanding amenity area which is bounded by a low brick wall on two sides 800mm to 1200mm in height with a metal entry gate. Refuse and recycling bins are currently stored within this area. The boundary wall along the property line dividing 40 Estcourt Road and the adjacent St. John's Parish Halls is 1500mm masonry.

The existing rear garden is 77.1m² and sub-divided in two zones of grass and hardstanding with timber panelled fencing (1800mm high) on the north and east side with the two-storey façade of St. John's Parish Hall running the full length of the garden on the south.

The site is within Flood Risk Zone 1, an area with low probability of flooding. Please refer to drawing 282-3-GA0001 and E0001 for location plan and site photographs.

The site is within Character Area 7B of the Estcourt Character Area Full Study Supplementary document. The Estcourt Road Conservation Area is characterised by two storey Victorian terraced housing with the surrounding built context dating from 19th Century to 20th century.



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2.3 Context: Character and Appearance of Existing Building

Refer to drawings 286-3-E001 to 286-3-007.

The existing building is currently configured as a 5-bedroom family dwelling with an existing GIA across two floors of 128 m².

40 Estcourt Road, in common with many of the existing building within conservation area, has had its share of adaptations, extensions, replacement windows and other renovations prior to the establishment of the present Conservation Area.

These adaptations have not been kind to the building. As a consequence, no exterior brickwork or detailing remains visible to front façade and the roof covering is a terracotta coloured pressed concrete tile. Windows and doors are predominantly white uPVC. Rear elevations are a mixture of painted masonry, painted render, rough cast pebble dash render, uPVC and painted timber sash/casement windows.

For the interior, little or no period detailing, or original layout configuration remain. Access to the rear garden from within the property and an internal narrow side accessway running along the north boundary.

3.0 Property Planning History

3.1 Recent History

While no recent planning history for the property is on file, it has been evidently extended and adapted at least twice in its past. The two-storey rear outrigger running along the south boundary shows material changes at the junctions between the phases of works.

3.2 20/013545/PREAPP – Pre-Planning Advice Letter received on 11/01/2021.

Change of use of the application site of Dwelling House (use class C3) to a House of Multiple Occupation for more than 6 persons. While the principal of HMO use and room sizes were accepted the proposed rear extensions, by means of their scale, form, and internal layout, were not accepted:

Below, extract outlining the case officer's advice from the Pre-Planning Advice Letter has been attached:



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'The proposed extensions would be unacceptable in depth, scale and design and would unacceptably impact the amenities of neighbouring properties. It is noted that there is an existing two storey rear extension to 6m. It may be possible to widen this extension within the site (infill to the church hall), however, a further increase to the rear depth is unlikely to be supported in respect of design and neighbour impact. The conversion of the dwelling to a HMO is acceptable in principle, however, the amenity of some rooms of the development as shown would be unacceptably poor.'

4.0 Proposed Development and Change Use

4.1 General Development Design

The application property is a two-storey, five-bedroom, semi-detached end of terrace residential (C3) Victorian property.

The application proposes a rear two-storey infill extension to the property and change of use of Dwelling House (use class C3) to a large House of Multiple Occupation for 5 persons/tenants.

Proposed change of use

Pre-Application 20/013545/PREAPP – Pre-Planning Advice Letter received on 11/01/2021, whereby the principle of conversion of the property to HMO use is accepted:

Principle of conversion to HMO

Saved Policy H13 of the Watford District Plan 2000 states that no more than 10% of the family houses in a streetblock should be converted to flats, HMOs or guest houses. The identified streetblock (Nos 18 to 42 evens and Nos 3 to 23 odds) contains 20 purpose built houses (this excludes commercial premises, non-residential buildings and purpose built flats). Council records and a site assessment show that of these, none have been converted to flats or Class C4 HMO's. The proposed conversion of the house at No.40 to an HMO would therefore create 1 conversion out of 20 dwellings, at a percentage of 5%. This is within the 10% limit and is acceptable in principle in accordance with saved Policy H13

4.2 The Design Description - Exterior

Refer to drawings 281-3-GA003, GA004, GA005



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The proposal design is adapting the existing Dwelling House to a to a House of Multiple Occupation according to the Watford Design Guide.

The planning application proposed the retaining of the front entrance to the dwelling, remodelling the entrance hallway space which will provide secure cycle storage for future residents.

The front patio will retain the same with the location of the bins in the same place.

The works proposed the demolishing of the existing chimneys which are not in use anymore.

On the rear elevation the proposal includes the remodelling of the ground and first floor façade and the infill extension of the east side elevation (church hall). This will expand the interior space creating new location for the living/dining and kitchen area.

The ground floor side extension is design and orientated to provide a large outlook from the kitchen/dining space within. The side rear extension is in the same line as the rear elevation and it will be masonry. The connection between the interior space and the garden will be made by the proposed metal sliding doors colour RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey which will replace the existing window.

On the first floor the existing white UPVC window will be replace with new metal frame window colour RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey. On the east side extension metal frame window colour RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey will be proposed,

The existing north side pitch roof on the rear elevation will the replace to have the same slope as the south side pitch roof. The exiting flat roof will be replaced with a new green roof which will cover also the proposed extension on the first-floor level.

4. 3 The Design Description - Interior

Refer to drawings 281-3-GA001 & GA002

The design intent is to create 5 self-contained bedsit units (each with ensuite bathroom) with shared communal access to a ground floor kitchen/lounge/dining space leading to the rear garden. The interior layout and provision of amenity for the HMO is guided by the authority's document:



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Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Amenity & Space Guidance to Landlords

The house is reconfigured by moving the main staircase to the centre of the plan to enable an efficient circulation core and unifying feature to the scheme. In way of the relocated stair, the previous hallway is expanded as a common entry vestibule with ample space for the secure storage of up to six bicycles on vertical racks. The remainder of the ground floor is given over to single bedsitting room (with ensuite), a guest WC, and the shared living/dining/kitchen.

The living area to the rear of the plan provides the connecting space between kitchen/dining and garden. The Living/Dining/Kitchen is a contemporary open plan of 30m² with an additional pantry space/cleaning cupboard. The space opens directly to the retained rear garden through full height glazed sliding door which maximise the natural light with the communal room.

On the first floor the proposed infill extension, in conjunction with the space of the existing out-rigger, provides space for two single bedsitting rooms with ensuite. In total, the first-floor houses 4 bedsitting rooms with ensuite bathrooms.

All the bedrooms benefit from the natural light coming to the space. Two of the bedrooms are facing to the main street and the rest two on the rear side with an opening to the garden.

4.4 Proposed Layout / Accommodation Schedule

Each habitable space, including bathrooms and utility room benefit from natural daylight either through an outward facing window or skylight. Each of the five (5) bedsitting rooms are provided with ensuite bathrooms.

The rooms comply with Internal Space Standards set out by Watford Borough Council as follow:

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Amenity & Space Guidance to Landlords

Minimum room sizes relevant to this application.

One person units of accommodation



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- 11m² including cooking facilities.

Common Rooms Kitchens

- Use by up to 5 persons - 9m²

Dining Kitchens

- Use by 4 – 6 persons - 11.5m²

Living and Dining Rooms

- Use by 4 – 6 persons - 11m²

Proposed Interior Accommodation Schedule

Proposed GIA 176 m² (48 m² increase over existing)

Ground Floor:

Entrance/Bike Storage – 10 m²

Hallway – 11 m²

Kitchen/Dining/Living – 30 m²

Pantry – 1 m²

WC -2 m²

Bedroom 1 (including en-suite) – 18 m²

First Floor:

Hallway – 6 m²

Bedroom 2 (including ensuite) – 16 m²

Bedroom 3 (including ensuite) – 15 m²

Bedroom 4 (including ensuite) – 18 m²

Bedroom 5 (including ensuite) – 15 m²

4.5 Materials

Proposed material details refer to drawing 286-3-E002

The existing front façade and existing pitched roof to the main building are unaffected by the proposed conversion and interior alterations. As such, the existing materials, windows, doors, front garden amenity walls, and hardstanding to the front elevation are retained as existing. The existing brickwork to the exposed flanking wall (north elevation) is retained as existing.

The rear extension, both existing and new, are to have insulated, self-coloured, fine grain render applied. New windows and doors to the rear elevation to be double glazed aluminium frames – colour Anthracite Grey RAL 7016.



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The proposed flat roof and refurbished flat roof to the existing extension to be a Green Roof with sedum planting.

The rear garden to include a strip of decking (open structure for drainage) with the remainder retained as grass.

5.0 Planning Policy Matters:

The proposed new dwelling is designed accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Watford Adopted Core Strategy, and the Supplementary Planning Guides.

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework and Compliance

2 – Achieving Sustainable Development.

2.1 An Economic Objective- land management.

- The proposed conversion is designed with accessible services and spaces that reflect current and future needs, health, and social well-being.

2.3 An Environmental Objective.

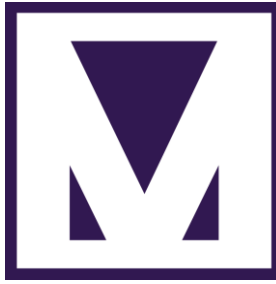
- The proposal will add to the biodiversity of the area by adding flat roof which includes Green Roof.

5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.

- The refurbishment of the existing dwelling is contributing to the national supply of suitable sustainable housing.

12 – Achieving well-designed homes.

- The proposed refurbishment and change of use are informed by the constraints and opportunities of the site. The design presented is a long-term sustainable solution achieving a high standard of living for its owners and future inhabitants. While the proposal express minor elements of contemporary design, these are subordinate and to the rear of the property and clearly articulated. The overall aim of the design proposal is to sustainably extend the useful life of the existing building without further degradation of character.



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5.2 Watford Adopted Core Strategy & Compliance

Policy SS 1

- The proposal will provide additional residential accommodation, satisfying the council's objectives to increase housing provision in Watford.
- The application site is of important location within the Town Centre Area of Watford, with great transport links, in a non-flood risk area.
- The scheme incorporates a high standard of sustainability and design.

Policy UD 1 – Delivering High Quality Design

- The proposed rear infill extension and modification to the existing outrigger, is an opportunity to thermally insulate the existing structure and unify the erratic and existing poor-quality exterior appearance to the rear of the building.
- The proposal retains bins storage to the front amenity, which are easily accessible from the street and in a specifically designed enclosure.
- The proposal has provision for a bike parking space, as encouraged by the council in the car and cycle parking standards.

Policy UD 2 – Built Heritage Conservation

- While the front façade is unaltered by the proposal the property is retained as a valuable heritage asset within the conservation area.
- The proposal causes no further visual harm or disturbance to the historic value of the conservatory area.

Policy SD 1,2,3,4 – Sustainable Design

- The proposed development and refurbishment of 40 Estcourt Road will improve the thermal efficiency and long-term sustainability of the existing property.

Policy GI 3 – Biodiversity

- The development proposal will improve the opportunity for biodiversity across the site. Area of green roof is proposed as a replacement covering to the existing outrigger extension and the new infill extension to the rear. The rear garden amenity retained as existing.

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance & Design Response

House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Amenity & Space



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Space and Overcrowding

The proposed HMO dwelling meets or exceeds the minimum standard size for accommodation. Each bedsitting room, including cooking facilities and bathroom provide a minimum combined area of 15m².

The common rooms Kitchen/Pantry, Dining and Living area total 31m² (including the pantry/cleaner cupboard). This exceeds the minimum requirement for shared common space within an HMO for five (5) persons:

- Kitchen use by up to 6 persons -10m²
- Dining and Living use by 4-6 persons -11m²

Watford Residential Design Guide (2016) – 7.0 Building New Homes

7.3.4 Building size and scale

- The building scale of the proposal is informed by the constraints and opportunities of the site. As said in the Watford Design Guide “*In existing areas, particularly in the case of infill or backland development, it is important that proposals respect - but not necessarily in all instances replicate – the height and scale of adjoining or nearby buildings.*”

The proposed infill rear extension is not discernible from the street and does not extend beyond the line of the existing two-story out-rigger. The development is scaled and organised to provide good quality accommodation delivered to a high standard without undue impact to the neighbours or the prevailing conservation area streetscape.

7.3.6 Internal Space Standards

- Each single person bedsit room provides a minimum of 12m², which together with the individual room setting out correspond to or exceed the internal space standards set out in the WRDG. The development, therefore, promises to deliver a higher standard and quality of space to its future occupiers.

7.3.22 Private Garden Space Standards

- The external space/ amenity and garden space adds up to 89m² which complies with the required area stated in the WRDG. For 5 or 6 person house – 86-99m²



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Access, Parking and Highways impact

The development is in a sustainable location and the surrounding roads are subject to a controlled parking restrictions meaning that the development is unlikely to create increased impacts to the highway.

Bikes

A minimum of one secure cycle storage space per HMO room is required for the development. The storage is provided within the covered entry vestibule for the house provides provision for up to 6 bikes. Vertical bike racks are to be provided with locking mechanisms for individual security.

Refuse & Recycling

Bin storage is retained to the front forecourt as existing. The front garden boundary wall is modified to provide screening on two sides.

Impact on Surrounding properties

As set out in section 7.3 of the RDG, new development should maintain appropriate relationships to the homes and gardens of neighbouring properties. Development should not unreasonably harm the light, outlook or privacy of neighbouring properties.

Nos 23, 25 and 27 Cross Street back onto the north side boundary of No.40 Estcourt Road with rear gardens of approximately 9m. The rear outrigger extension to 40 Estcourt Road is retained as existing with the infill extension kept to the same line. Therefore, no overlooking, loss of light, visual impact, or loss of privacy is caused to the neighbouring properties along the north and west garden boundary.

6.0 Summary

The applicant seeks full planning permission for change the use and extension of an existing 5-bedroom Dwelling House (use class C3) to create a C4 HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) for 5 persons.

The proposal is compliant with the NPPF, the Watford Adopted Core Strategy and the Watford Supplementary Planning Guidance.

In summary, the proposal provides:

- Additional residential accommodation in a sought-after area within the town centre of Watford, with excellent transport links;



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- Sustainable adaptation, retention, and reuse of an existing site within a conservation area;
- Accommodation that meets the living standard requirements for HMO use;
- A well-designed scheme that will not cause harm or impact the light, outlook, or privacy to neighbouring properties.