

## **Re: Planning Statement in Support of Change of Use from C3 to C4 for 335 The Hides, Harlow**

Dear Harlow Town Council,

We are writing to formally submit this planning statement in support of our application to change the use class from C3 (Dwellinghouses) to C4 (Houses in Multiple Occupation) for the property located at No. 335, The Hides, Harlow. This application seeks to regularise and improve the existing HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) at the mentioned address.

### **Background**

The property at No. 335, The Hides, Harlow, has been operating as an HMO for a considerable period of time. It currently holds all necessary licenses required for an HMO under the previous use class C3. The proposed change of use to C4 is intended to bring the property in line with the existing use and provide an opportunity to modernise and improve living conditions for the current residents.

### **Proposed Changes and Enhancements**

**Conversion of the Garage:** As part of this application, we have converted the garage space into additional living accommodation to ensure that the property meets modern HMO standards. This conversion will be carried out in compliance with all relevant building regulations and planning permissions.

**Proposed rear extension:** We are proposing to form a new timber framed rear extension to the property which will house the boiler and cylinder. The materiality's will be in keeping with that of the existing property.

**Internal Layout Alterations:** To enhance the living standards of the existing residents, we have made internal layout alterations within the property. These changes include the creation of four new en-suite bathrooms, providing greater comfort and privacy for the occupants.

**Infill of existing recessed façade:** We are proposing to infill the front recessed area of the property, aiming to provide additional internal space for the residents. We are aware of the significance of maintaining the existing parking spaces located at 335 The Hides. To safeguard these parking provisions, we have ensured that there is a 5m gap between the proposed external facade and the public footpath.

## **Benefits of the Proposal**

**Improved Living Standards:** The proposed changes and enhancements will significantly improve the living conditions for the current residents of the HMO. The addition of en-suite bathrooms and the conversion of the garage will provide greater convenience and comfort.

**Contribution to Housing Supply:** By maintaining and modernising the existing HMO, we are contributing to the housing supply in Harlow, addressing the need for affordable and accessible accommodation.

**Minimal Impact on Surrounding Area:** The proposed changes are very minimal and do not affect the external appearance or character of the property. Therefore, there will be no adverse impact on the surrounding area or neighbouring properties.

**Compliance with Regulations:** We are committed to ensuring that the property complies with all necessary regulations and standards, including those related to fire safety, occupancy limits, and amenity space requirements.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, we believe that the proposed change of use from C3 to C4, along with the associated alterations and enhancements, will be beneficial for the property at No. 335, The Hides, Harlow, and its residents. We are committed to working closely with the local planning authority to ensure that all necessary conditions and requirements are met.

## References to Policy:

### Harlow Housing development strategy 2020 – 2025 priorities include:

(1): creating a suitable supply of new housing to meet local housing needs.

(2): addressing the housing needs of target and vulnerable groups.

(3): Improving the housing in private sector.

In relation to priority 2, two of the three key objectives include providing:

- Affordable housing negotiated through the planning system (and)
- Diversifying the range of affordable housing options to provide greater affordable choice for local people.

Key themes included supporting vulnerable groups by ensuring “homes benefit from digital technology” and “supports young people leaving care”

Priority 3 underscores the significance of fostering growth within the private rental sector, which plays a crucial role in homelessness prevention. An essential focus lies in enhancing the availability, diversity, and quality of the private rental sector.

For Harlow Council, a paramount goal is to enhance the quality of the 34% of private rental sector housing stock that currently falls below the “decent standard.”

This planning application aligns with all three priorities and is particularly relevant to achieving objectives two and three under the second priority.

The Harlow Local Development Strategy of 2020, at that time, projected a total housing demand of 7,409 new dwellings by 2023. A primary emphasis of this strategy was on ensuring the affordability of housing, marking it as a critical concern. The plan...

“seeks to deliver a wide range of housing types including market, affordable and specialist housing.... the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), calculates the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) for the district, including affordable and specialist housing requirement. However, in order to contribute to meeting the district's affordable housing need...additional housing above the OAHN has been proposed”. (7.2 – 7.3)

The 2020 plan indicates that to ensure an adequate housing supply to meet Harlow's Overall Assessment of Housing Needs (OAHN), an additional 2,380 dwellings are proposed, resulting in a total requirement of 9,200 dwellings during the Local Plan period.

Objective 5 of the plan is centred on “Integrating Regeneration and Growth.” It seeks to accomplish this by providing “a diverse range of housing options, encompassing various tenures and housing types.” This approach is aimed at “drawing in new residents and professionals to support the district's redevelopment goals.” Achieving this objective requires ensuring that “housing needs for different types of households are addressed through the provision of appropriate housing types and a well-balanced mix of options” (Sections 7.9 – 7.11).

To meet the anticipated demand for affordable housing, the plan is geared towards promoting the development of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). A specific example is 335 The Hides located at CM20 3QY, which offers secure and safe accommodation. It consists of six generously sized rooms with internet access and inclusive utility bills. The primary focus is on providing high-quality shared living spaces, including communal areas and a spacious rear garden.

This accommodation includes parking space for one vehicle and established waste disposal arrangements. The overarching goal is to offer housing to local residents, many of whom have recently been recruited to support the local infrastructure. This includes employees of the nearby Princess Alexandra Hospital and individuals working in industries and corporations that are contributing to local development. Moreover, we are introducing new bike storage facilities to further support eco-friendly commuting choices. Furthermore, the property enjoys an excellent location with easy town access, promoting sustainability in travel.

National legislation provides for permitted development rights, allowing the transformation of a dwelling into a small HMO without necessitating planning permission. This policy is encouraging the development of such accommodation, albeit with due consideration for its potential impact on the local area.

Utilising 335 The Hides as a 6-bedroom HMO contributes to enhancing the variety and affordability of housing options for the local community. This is achieved without the need for extensive development on undeveloped land or altering the character of the building or its surroundings. For these reasons, it aligns with both the Harlow housing strategy and planning guidelines, which specify that "The redevelopment of existing residential development will be supported in appropriate instances, particularly when it leads to an increase in housing provision on a site" (14.21).

Building Regulations (M4) outline the criteria that must be met when a building undergoes a change of use. 335 The Hides is currently operating as a licensed HMO and fully adheres to the necessary permits and building regulations compliance requirements, however, the applicant's aim is to enhance the living conditions for current residents with the new proposal. These enhancements will ensure that all new or modified areas meet essential safety standards. This will include the installation of integrated smoke alarms in every habitable room, along with fire alarms equipped with exits at both the front and rear. Additionally, self-closing fire doors will be implemented in any areas that undergo modification. As part of these future improvements, a comprehensive fire assessment will be conducted, and a carbon monoxide monitor will be put in place. All forthcoming gas and electrical installations will be officially certified, and electrical items will undergo Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) to ensure safety compliance. Furthermore, a certified fire extinguisher and fire blanket will be made readily available to residents in the event of a fire emergency.

Yours sincerely,

George Dobson

Director

G2 Architecture + Design