

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposal	From single dwellinghouse (C3) to flexible use residential and 6no bedroom house in multiple occupation (C4)
Location	47 Eastbrook Road, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 1LN

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INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

This statement is submitted on behalf of WSE Property Services Ltd in support of the application for full planning permission relating to a change of use at 47 Eastbrook Road, Portslade, BN41 1LN

Planning permission is sought for a change of use from (C3) dwellinghouse to (C4) house in multiple occupation, internal alterations, rear extension and loft conversion.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application forms, Policy CP21 Assessment and drawings.

The application drawings, provided by CAT Architectural Services Ltd, are:

- 01: Existing Plans
- 02: Existing Elevations
- 03: Proposed Plans
- 04: Proposed Elevations
- 05: Proposed Section A-A, Location Plan & Existing and Proposed Block Plans

This statement demonstrates that planning permission should be granted for the works and change of use to C4 HMO. Analysis is provided of:

- The site and area
- The proposed development
- Planning policy
- The principle of the change of use
- Neighbouring amenity
- Standard of accommodation
- Design and appearance of the proposed external works

It will be shown that the site is capable of accommodating an HMO of this size and can deliver sufficient private and communal facilities for residents without causing harm to the balance of the community or the amenities of neighbours.

Site Description

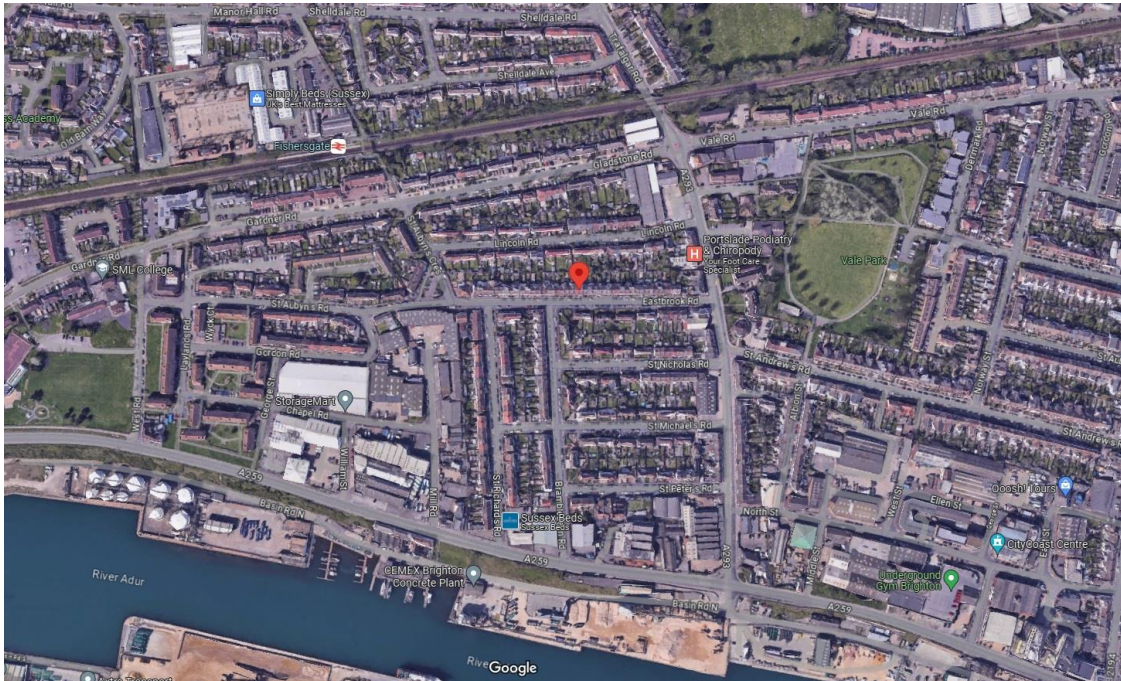
The application relates to a two-storey mid terrace property which is located on the north side of Eastbrook Road, Portslade. The properties within the area are relatively uniform in their appearance.

The site currently forms a single unit of residential accommodation, amounting to a 3 bedroom house. The site incorporates amenity space to the rear. It is considered to be a C3 residential dwelling house.

47 Eastbrook Road is in Portslade, a western suburb of the city of Brighton and Hove. Portslade Village was developed during the 16th Century. The area is bisected from east to west by the old A27 (now the A270) between Brighton and Worthing. The area is well served by local services, day to day shops and public transport. Fishersgate train station is located within a 6-minute walking distance and 15-minutes to Portslade station

The proposal seeks to change the use of the building to include a house in multiple occupation for 6 occupiers. This changes the use from use class C3 to C4. Ordinarily there would be permitted development rights that would allow for this change of use without requiring planning permission, however an Article 4 direction was put in place by Brighton & Hove City Council on 5 April 2013. The result of the Article 4 direction means that the permitted development rights have been removed and a planning application will be required.

The proposed layout will allow for 6No. bedrooms, 2 of which are located on the ground floor with their own en-suite facilities and an additional communal separate WC, along with an open plan kitchen/dining/living space with access to the rear amenity space. 2 further bedrooms occupy the first floor both with en-suite facilities and utility room for laundry. The loft comprises 2 more bedrooms with a large shared bathroom.



To manage the concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) largely associated with university students the Council introduced an Article 4 direction in April 2013. The Article 4 removed the permitted development rights of C3 dwelling houses in five wards to change use to C4 HMOs. The Article 4 Direction was extended citywide in June 2020.

The Article 4 Direction was introduced to provide a mechanism to control the concentration of shared houses in particular areas of the City. The objective of the Direction is to manage, rather than prevent, the conversion of houses into HMOs. Shared houses play a valuable role in the local housing supply by providing affordable and accessible housing to significant demographics, including students, hospitality workers and young professionals.

The Direction and related City Plan Policy CP21 allow for the change of use from C3 to HMO uses through a grant of planning permission in cases where a mixed and balanced community is maintained.

The City Plan Policies Map confirms the site is not in a Conservation Area or subject to any policy designation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There are no planning applications relating to 47 Eastbrook Road listed on Brighton & Hove City Council's online planning register (showing applications to 1997).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The development proposed at 47 Eastbrook Road is the change of use from (C3) dwelling to (C4) HMO along with associated works. The proposal includes internal alterations, rear extension and loft conversion with dormer roof. The resultant (C4) HMO will provide six single-occupancy bedrooms ranging from 7.9 to 10.0m².

At ground-floor the current living room and kitchen will be converted into 2 bedrooms with their own en-suite facilities. The ground floor will be extended and along with the existing dining/living area will create a new kitchen, dining and living space.

The first floor is currently split into 3 small bedrooms. These three bedrooms will be replaced by 2 further bedrooms both with en-suite facilities. An additional separate amenity in the use of a utility room for laundry will also be located on this floor.

The loft comprises 2 more bedrooms with a large shared bathroom and landing space.

The Areas are as follows =

Bedroom 1 (Front ground)	= 7.9m ²
Bedroom 2 (Rear ground)	= 9.6m ²
Bedroom 3 (Front first)	= 9.4m ²
Bedroom 4 (Rear First)	= 10 m ²
Bedroom 5 (Front second)	= 9.7m ²
Bedroom 6 (Rear second)	= 8.8m ²
Communal Area (Kitchen,Dining,Living)	= 20.4m ²
Utility/ Laundry Area	= 3.8m ²
Total Communal area	= 24.2 m ²

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The following policy of the Brighton & Hove City Plan Part One is relevant to this application: CP21: Student housing and Housing in multiple occupation. Part ii of the policy directly relates to changes of use to HMO. It states that where more than 10% of dwellings within a 50metre radius of the application site are already in HMO use further conversions to HMO will be resisted. Conversely, where the proportion of dwellings in HMO use is less than 10% then changes of use to HMO will be acceptable in principle.

The following saved policies of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan 2005 are relevant to this application: QD14: Extensions and Alterations - requires alterations to buildings to be well designed, sited and detailed in relation to the host property, adjoining properties and the area; and use materials sympathetic to the parent building. QD27: Protection of Amenity - requires the protection of the amenity of existing and future occupiers of sites and neighbouring premises potentially affected by development.

The Brighton & Hove City Plan Part Two is not yet adopted but has a bearing on the application. Of note is Draft Policy DM7: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). With regard to changes of use to (C4) HMO the policy states that the following criteria must be met:

- a) fewer than 20% of dwellings in the wider neighbourhood area are already in use as HMOs
- b) the proposal does not result in a non-HMO dwelling being sandwiched between two existing HMOs in a continuous frontage;
- c) the proposal does not lead to a continuous frontage of three or more HMOs;
- d) the internal and private outdoor space standards provided comply with Policy DM1;
- e) communal living space and cooking and bathroom facilities are provided appropriate in size to the expected number of occupants.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The following material considerations are relevant to this application: the principle of the change of use to a HMO; the amenity of neighbours; the design and appearance of external alterations and the standard of accommodation. These considerations are addressed below.

Principle of Development

A survey of the number and use of dwellings within a 50metre radius of the site has been carried out. Please see accompanying Policy CP21 Assessment. The Assessment shows that there are 49 individual neighbouring dwellings, excluding 47 Eastbrook Road, within the specified 50m radius. None of these neighbouring dwellings are currently in HMO use, so the local HMO density is 0%.

The threshold test of Policy CP21 is passed, and the principle of development is acceptable. A mixed and balanced community, with a clear predominance of family homes, will be maintained in the neighbourhood.

The HMO licence analysis also confirms that no residential dwelling would be 'sandwiched' between HMO and a continuous frontage of three HMOs would not be created. As such, the principal tests of draft Policy DM7 are met.

Neighbouring amenity

Ordinarily it remains permitted development for residential properties to move between the C3 and C4 use classes. This recognises there is little difference between the respective impacts of these dwelling types. The objective of the Article 4 Direction in place is to prevent concentrations of HMOs, to maintain balanced housing communities. The Article 4 Direction does not indicate that C4 HMOs are inherently harmful to neighbours and these remain an important element of housing provision within the city, as recognised within Policy CP21.

Since there are no HMOs within the neighbourhood, no cumulative adverse impact that would arise through a concentration of HMOs will be caused to neighbours.

The HMO for six persons is proposed in place of a dwelling for a family group that would likely accommodate four - five persons. The increase in occupancy level would therefore be minor. It is unlikely that a significant or noticeable increase in activity levels over the existing use would occur.

However, the change in occupation type may result in a slight shift in the behavioural patterns from the house. Given the location of the property (relatively distant from the main University campuses), the HMO use is more likely to be attractive to adults/professionals who prefer the sociability of a shared dwellinghouse or are not yet in a position to rent or purchase their own home.

Comings and goings from the house are therefore likely to be typical of any Use Class C3 residential use and are not likely to cause any material harm to neighbouring residents. As a C4 HMO the property may be let on a room by room basis (most room benefitting from en suite facilities) or to a group. The levels of independence between residents are likely to be varied but the property would provide a number of different communal spaces that could be used by groups or individuals as required.

As family homes, smaller dwellings and apartments and HMOs are scattered in Portslade, varied patterns of behaviour are already established. Shared accommodation forms a key part of the dwelling mix and provides accessible housing to various community groups, including students, young professionals, short-term residents and contract workers. The C4 use would therefore be in keeping with the character of the area.

The supporting text to Policy CP21 highlights that harm is more likely to be caused when there are over-concentrations of HMO uses in one area and the policy is designed to work to prevent this. Delivering an HMO use within this area would assist in delivering mixed communities and increasing choice in the market in an area where HMO uses are not as prevalent.

The property is laid out in a conventional manner, with communal living areas located a ground floor level..

For these reasons, the amenity of neighbouring residents will be protected in compliance with Policy QD27.

Standard of accommodation

The standard of accommodation provided for residents at 47 Eastbrook Road will be high and will be a modern refurbishment of the building as well as delivering on all relevant quality standards in terms of internal floor areas. The six bedrooms (ranging from 7.9m² to 10m², excluding the en suites) will meet or exceed the 7.5m² of floorspace as required for a single bedroom in the Nationally Describe Space Standards. The Standards and adherence criteria in Draft Policy DM1 which is referred to in Draft Policy DM7.

As illustrated on the plans, all expected furniture (beds, wardrobes, desks, and chairs) will fit comfortably within the bedrooms with circulation space around. The rooms are a usable rectangular shape. Four rooms will benefit from a private en suite and one bathroom shared by just two occupiers. The bedrooms would all benefit from good levels of natural light and outlook through large windows. The bedrooms will function well as both sleeping quarters and private amenity space.

The communal amenity areas, within the ground floor for living, dining and a kitchen area, further demonstrates the high standard of accommodation proposed. The kitchen area includes a generous provision of worktops and space for all occupiers to store and prepare food. The kitchen leads to an open-plan dining and living room, where there is ample space for both living functions separately and associated furniture. This leads to the garden, providing more communal space to benefit the household.

The combined communal space provides approximately 24.2m² of floor area, which equates to 4.03m² per occupier. This meets the expectation set out in draft Policy DM7 that 4m² of communal space is to be provided per HMO occupant. In addition to this quantitative measure of communal living space provision, the proposed communal living areas are all well-sized and meet a range of needs including space for residents too prepare and eat food individually or as a group, space to relax either with other residents or in a more private manner and outside amenity space for enjoyment in good weather.

One shared WC and utility room is also provided for use between the six occupiers. Four of the occupiers also benefits from their own en-suite bathroom with one bathroom being shared by just two occupiers.

The existing property will includes an outdoor sheltered storage for residents too, and space for covered cycle storage, which is proposed within the rear garden for added security.

As can be seen, high-quality accommodation is proposed and the amenity of future occupiers will be protected, in further compliance with Policy QD27. Design and Visual Impact

As part of the development there are several external alterations to the building to improve the quality of accommodation and enable the conversion of the loft space to habitable living space.

The proposals are therefore considered to provide a net visual improvement to the building

in-keeping with the residential character of the building and wider area. There would be not significant changes to the shape, scale or form of the building and no amenity impacts would arise from the external changes proposed. The proposals therefore accord with the requirements of Policy QD14 of the Local Plan and Policy CP12 of the City Plan – Part One.

CONCLUSIONS

Planning Permission is sought at 47 Eastbrook Road, Portslade, Brighton, for the change of use from (C3) dwelling to C4.

The change of use is acceptable in principle as less than 10% of dwellings within a 50metre radius are currently in HMO use. The threshold test of Policy CP21 is passed, and a mixed and balanced community would be maintained.

The absence of any existing HMOs in the area will ensure neighbouring amenity is protected and Policy QD27 is complied with. The nature of the occupation proposed and the layout of the building will not result in any material amenity impacts, overlooking and loss of privacy would be reduced from changes to the number of windows within the side elevation of the building.

The proposed HMO accommodation will be provided at a high quality, with improvements to the quality of the building (both externally and internally) and its layout. All bedrooms meet or exceed expected sizes and a generous, well-arranged communal amenity spaces will be created that will meet the future needs of residents. The proposal further complies with Policy QD27 in this regard.

In light of the above, Brighton & Hove City Council is respectfully requested to grant Planning Permission without undue delay.