

Response from Housing Growth and Regeneration
2022/93938 Piazza Shopping Centre, New Street and Albion Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2TR
Change of use from A1 (business retail and storage) to C3 (residential) 34 studio flats at first and second floors and external alterations
Date Responded: 18th January 2023
Responding Officer: Liz Jefferson
Responding Ref:

Nationally described space standard:

The nationally described space standard is a technical planning standard which sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.

The proposed floor areas set out in the accommodation schedule for this application are significantly below the minimum requirements of the nationally described space standard. A new dwelling for one person with one bedroom would require a minimum floor space of 39 square metres or 37 square metres if the dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom. The proposals range from 16 sq metres to 30.3 square metres.

The Huddersfield Blueprint:

The Huddersfield Blueprint is a ten-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day town centre. The vision for Huddersfield is that it will be a busy, family-friendly town centre that stays open for longer with a unique culture, arts and leisure offer and a variety of thriving businesses. The scale of investment and transformation, including high quality, innovative culture, arts and leisure offers will improve the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, providing new opportunities for residential development. In turn, new residents and new residential spending will help to sustain culture, arts and leisure developments within the town centre.

The Blueprint vision for Huddersfield town centre living is: 'To create a vibrant community in Huddersfield Town Centre, attractive to young professionals, with strong connections to neighbouring cities and the Pennines.'

The Huddersfield Town Centre Living Prospectus:

The Huddersfield Town Centre living prospectus went to Cabinet on 26th July 2022. The vision put forward is that 'Kirklees Council is committed to bringing high-quality, affordable residential development to the town centre.' The cabinet report emphasised the goal of improving the quality of accommodation across the town centre, boosting the desirability of Huddersfield's housing market to potential residents and ensuring affordable homes are built in the right places, based on housing market demand and needs.

The one bed studio flats proposed are not considered to support the vision for high quality development in Huddersfield town centre. It is our view that they would therefore not contribute to boosting the desirability of the market or to create the vibrant community attractive to young professionals that is envisioned by the Huddersfield Blueprint.

Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP11: Housing Mix and Affordable Housing:

This policy states that:

‘All proposals for housing, including those affecting the existing housing stock, will be of high quality and design and contribute to creating mixed and balanced communities in line with the latest evidence of housing need. All proposals for housing must aim to provide a mix (size and tenure) of housing suitable for different household types which reflect changes in household composition in Kirklees in the types of dwelling they provide, taking into account the latest evidence of the need for different types of housing. This includes consideration of provision for those with specialist needs. For schemes of more than 10 dwellings or those of 0.4ha or greater in size, the housing mix should reflect the proportions of households that require housing, achieving a mix of house size and tenure. The council encourages the inclusion of appropriate design elements that ensure buildings are suitable or can be adapted to meet the needs of people needing specialist accommodation at present and into later life.’

Although the Design and Access statement provided quotes the above policy, there is no evidence provided that the proposed development meets this criteria. All the proposed dwellings are one bed studio flats for the market, and therefore do not provide a mix of size and tenure. No evidence of consideration of provision for those with specialist needs has been provided.

Conclusion and response to the application from Housing Growth:

Based on the above, our view is that the proposed development does not adequately meet the necessary standards or support the wider vision for Huddersfield Town Centre in the following ways:

- Does not meet nationally described space standards
- Does not improve the quality of accommodation across the town centre in line with the Town Centre Living prospectus
- Does not boost the desirability of the Huddersfield housing market to potential residents or attract young professionals and graduates.
- Does not meet the requirements of the Kirklees Local Plan for providing a mix of housing size and tenure or take into account current housing need.

The area around New Street is one of the identified opportunity areas within the Huddersfield Blueprint and Town Centre Living Prospectus, and we would welcome high quality proposed developments that contribute to our long-term strategic vision in this area.