

# PLANNING STATEMENT

## MARKET STREET HUDDERSFIELD



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## Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by C49 Architecture Ltd

The statement has been provided in support of a full planning application for a student accommodation development at Market Street, Huddersfield. The proposal is for the change of use as a student accommodation building.

The proposals involve a change of use with a small rooftop extension within the height limits of the existing. The existing building which has been commercially underused for many years even though low rents are available and is presently largely vacant.

## Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located at 30 Market Street, Huddersfield. The site is on the corner of Market Street backing onto Threadneedle Street.

The area surrounding is mainly retail and commercial but there are several underused and empty buildings.

Sainsburys and the bus/train stations are within a short walk.

The property is a largely vacant 10 storey office which can be seen from Huddersfield ring road.

The building likely dates from the 1960s/1970s.

The building has a concrete frame construction with the elevations constructed in facing brick with large horizontally proportioned areas of aluminium framed glazing.

The building has a lower ground floor car parking area. This parking area is extremely tight but has 14 spaces present. Access to the basement is from Threadneedle Street.

The site is the town centre boundary as defined in the local development plan. The application site lies within an area that is not designated in the local development plan for any specific use.

The site is located outside the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area.

The application site lies within the town centre and built-up area and is not allocated for a specific use by the Kirklees Local Plan.

## The Surrounding Area

The property is well placed within the town centre and close to the University of Huddersfield Campus which lies a short walk.

The building has level access for students and due to its location has commercial and retail uses within the immediate vicinity. The site is located within minute's walk of a wide array of shops, services and amenities to meet the day-to-day requirements of the student residents including cafes, pubs, takeaways, hairdressers, post-office, supermarkets etc.



Huddersfield Bus Station is located within a minute's walk of the site, being located on Upperhead Row. Huddersfield Railway Station is located a few minutes further.

The Transport Statement submitted with the application confirms that the site has good access to highly frequency public transport services connecting to key destinations within the local area and beyond.

### **The Proposal**

The proposed conversion of the building to student housing will bring a long-term vacant building back into use. The scheme will include new studio bedrooms and be served by a new concierge entrance.

The cycle store would provide spaces for up to 100 cycles.

Amenities are located within the building such as gym, study spaces as well as communal lounges.

### **Planning Policy Context**

Planning policy guidance of relevance to the proposed scheme, and which provides the context for its assessment, is set out within The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); The Development Plan for Kirklees.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018 and last updated in July 2021. This framework sets out the government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. It replaces the Framework published in March 2012, however a presumption in favour of sustainable development continues to be at the heart of the NPPF which ensures that development is pursued in a positive way.

Development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay. Paragraph 11 confirms that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the proposed development; or any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be pursued in mutually supportive ways through the planning system.

### **Delivering Sustainable Development**

The NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. These sustainable objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the framework. The NPPF is split into 17 chapters, the chapters of relevance to this development are discussed below.

Chapter 5- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes– paragraph 60 explains that in order to support the government's commitment to significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward for development where it is needed, that the needs of all groups

with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

Chapter 6- Building a strong and competitive economy - emphasises that the government is committed to ensuring that the planning system should help to support economic growth. It recognises that a poor environment and a lack of housing can act as a potential barrier to investment.

Chapter 7- Ensuring the vitality of Town Centres– advises that planning policies should recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

Chapter 8- Promoting healthy communities- the planning system should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe communities. Planning decisions should aim to achieve places which promote, amongst other things, safe and accessible developments, where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion. Para. 95 provides advice in relation to educational provision and notes it is an important objective of the planning system to support education developments to meet the needs of existing communities and advises *'Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.'*

Chapter 9- Promoting sustainable transport - to protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes, development should be located and designed to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities. Paragraph 111 advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highways safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Chapter 11- Making effective use of land – the NPPF recognises the need for the planning system to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land. Paragraph 120 (d) explains that planning should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for accommodation where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.

The chapter goes on to discuss how appropriate densities can be achieved. Paragraph 124 sets out that the planning system should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the following:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- b) local market conditions and viability.
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

Chapter 12- Achieving well-designed places- this chapter sets out at paragraph 130 that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

- b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- c) Are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- d) Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit.
- e) Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks.
- f) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.

Chapter 14- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change- this chapter emphasises the importance of securing reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change; and, in terms of flooding, development should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Chapter 15- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment– this chapter advises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services and minimising impacts of biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

Chapter 16- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment– this provides guidance regarding conservation matters. Paragraphs 194 and 195 require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting; set out that the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance; and, state that local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. This statement demonstrates that the information and significance requirements of national policy have been complied with.

Decision making – guidance in paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way, making use of the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants. Decision - makers at all levels should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

## **The Development Plan for Kirklees Metropolitan Borough**

### **Introduction**

The Local Plan is the statutory Development Plan and its purpose is to set out the policies necessary to achieve the strategy and how much new development there should be in the district and where it will go. The Local Plan covers the administrative area of Kirklees Council except for the part within the Peak District National Park. The Plan covers the period 2013 – 2031.

Part 1 of the Local Plan sets out a vision for Kirklees in 2031 and defines strategic objectives to secure the delivery of the vision. The main strategic objectives of relevance to the proposal are considered to be:

*'Objective 1: Strengthen the role of town centres, particularly Huddersfield to support their vitality and viability'.*

*'Objective 4: Provide new homes which meet the housing needs of the community offering a range of size, tenure and affordability, support existing communities and access to employment, public transport, shops and services'.*

*'Objective 5. Give all residents the opportunity of a healthy lifestyle, free from crime and help to achieve their potential in work and education'.*

*'Objective 7. Promote development that helps to reduce and mitigate climate change, and development which is adapted so that the potential impact from climate change is reduced and to help the transition towards a low carbon economy'.*

*'Objective 9. Promote the re-use of existing buildings and the use of brownfield land to meet development needs and support the regeneration of areas'.*

Part 2 of the Local Plan is an 'Allocations and Designations' document which sets out the land allocations and designations included in the Local Plan. The site specific policies applicable to the application site are discussed at Section 2. To confirm, the application site lies within the town centre area and is not allocated for a specific use by the Kirklees Local Plan. The site lies outside but close to the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area.

#### **Policy LP7 'Efficient and effective use of land and buildings'**

This policy encourages the effective use of land by promoting the reuse of land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) provided that it is not of high environmental value. Policy LP7 advises: *'To ensure the best use of land and buildings, proposals:*

- a. should encourage the efficient use of previously developed land in sustainable locations provided that it is not of high environmental value;*
- b. should encourage the reuse or adaptation of vacant or underused properties;*
- c. should give priority to despoiled, degraded, derelict and contaminated land provided that it is not of high environmental value;*
- d. will allow for access to adjoining undeveloped land so it may subsequently be developed. Housing density should ensure efficient use of land, in keeping with the character of the area and the design of the scheme:*

#### **Policy LP8 'Safeguarding employment land and premises'**

Policy LP8 seeks to safeguard employment land and premises and this policy sets out where and under what circumstances the change of employment land and premises to non employment generating uses, either by redevelopment or conversion, will be acceptable:

*'1. Proposals for development or re-development for employment generating uses (as defined in the Glossary) in Priority Employment Areas will be supported where there is no conflict with the established employment uses (as defined in the Glossary) in the area. In*

*instances where the site is out of centre and the proposal includes main town centre uses then policy LP13 will need to be applied.*

*2. Within Priority Employment Areas, proposals for redevelopment resulting in a non- employment generating use, or for the conversion or change of use of sites and premises in use or last used for employment, will only be supported where:*

- a. it can be demonstrated that the site or premises are no longer capable of employment use; and*
- b. the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and where applicable, would not prejudice the continued use of neighbouring land for employment.'*

**Policy LP11 'Housing Mix and Affordable Housing'**

This policy advises 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'*.

The justification notes that the *'Kirklees Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) provides evidence to allow the Local Plan to set out policies to achieve an appropriate housing tenure and mix to meet needs within Kirklees. The SHMA sets out household needs and examines the current range of housing stock. The policy allows the provision of sufficient homes and land to ensure that the needs of different groups can be planned for, in accordance with national planning policy, including families with children, younger and older people, people with disabilities, service families, students and people wishing to build their own home'*.

**Policy LP13 'Town Centre Uses'**

Policy LP13 allocates the core of Huddersfield Town Centre as *'principal town centre'*. The designated area will provide for shopping needs and be a focus for financial and professional services; offices, entertainment; sport, leisure, arts, culture and tourism facilities; further and higher education; and health services.

Policy LP13 is generally supportive of principal of higher education provision/accommodation within the town centre itself. It follows that edge of centre locations will also be judged to be suitable for student accommodation.

**Policy LP15 'Residential use in town centres'**

Policy LP15 seeks to encourage residential provision (including student accommodation) on appropriate sites including on the upper floors of existing buildings and in new buildings. Such development will be supported subject to Criterion d) which seeks *'the protection of the amenity of existing residents and future occupiers of the proposed residential use in accordance with amenity and design policies within the plan, and will in particular consider matters such as privacy, noise and air quality'*.

**Policy LP17 'Huddersfield Town Centre'**

Within the Huddersfield Town Centre boundary Policy LP17 advises that *'Huddersfield Town Centre will be the principal focus for high quality comparison retail goods within the district, supported by a range of leisure, tourism, office (including high quality grade A office space), and other main town centres uses. Huddersfield town centre will also provide high quality educational facilities and opportunities for town centre living. 5.19 The justification to this policy advises that:*

*'The University of Huddersfield plays an important role in the operation of the town centre with its location to the south east of the town centres primary shopping area. The University has over 23,000 students with over 2,000 staff and is a key employer for the town and the wider area. The University brings a significant number of visitors to the town centre, and in recent years has led to the significant provision of town centre and edge of centre student accommodation'*. It goes on:

*'The University has invested significantly in new facilities providing improved facilities for students, and also constructed landmark buildings in key gateway sites into the town centre. The development of new, and redevelopment of facilities for the University is key in continuing to support the success of both the University and town centre. Green access routes would enhance connectivity between the town centre and the University'*.

**Policy LP20 'Sustainable travel'**

This Policy advises that new development will be located:

*'To ensure the need to travel is reduced and that essential travel needs can be met by forms of sustainable transport other than the private car. The council will support development proposals that can be served by alternative modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking.*

*The council will support demand management measures which discourage single occupancy car travel within new development and encourage the use of low emission vehicles to improve areas with low levels of air quality. Proposals should include measures to encourage the use of sustainable travel options, including public transport, the promotion of personal journey planning, walking, cycling, car sharing, electronic communication and home working.*

*Travel plans will normally be required for all major planning applications in accordance with current guidance and should set targets and monitoring arrangements to ensure sustainable travel patterns are maintained. Travel plans should include agreed and defined outcomes related to a package of specified measures to be implemented including an approach to lower carbon emissions where applicable.*

*Proposals for new development shall be designed to encourage sustainable modes of travel and demonstrate how links have been utilised to encourage connectivity. Proposals will be required to facilitate the needs of the following user hierarchy: a) pedestrians; b) cyclists; c) public transport and d) private vehicles'.*

**Policy LP21 'Highways and Access'**

This Policy advises that *'Proposals shall demonstrate that they can accommodate sustainable modes of transport and be accessed effectively and safely by all users. All proposals shall:*

- a. ensure the safe and efficient flow of traffic within the development and on the surrounding highway network;*
- b. where needed, provide new infrastructure or improvements on or off site to ensure safe access from the highway network for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and private vehicles;*
- c. be accompanied by a supporting Transport Assessment or Transport Statement where the development would generate significant trip generation, providing detail as to the impact on highway safety, air quality, noise and light restrictions;*
- d. take into account changes in site levels and topography to ensure the development can be accessed easily and safely by all sections of the community and by different modes of transport;*
- e. take into account the features of surrounding roads and footpaths and provide adequate layout and visibility to allow the development to be accessed safely;*
- f. take into account access for emergency, service and refuse collection vehicles;*
- g. provide on-site safe, secure and convenient cycle parking/storage facilities to encourage sustainable travel modes'.*

**Policy LP22 'Parking'**

This policy advises that *'All proposals shall provide full details of the design and levels of proposed parking provision. They should demonstrate how the design and amount of parking proposed is the most efficient use of land within the development as part of encouraging sustainable travel'.* Two criteria of relevance are noted:

*'g) provision will be made to meet the needs of cyclists for cycling parking in new developments;*

*h) provision will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled people for the parking of vehicles'.*

### **Policy LP24 'Design'**

This policy advises that *'Good design should be at the core of all proposals in the district and should be considered at the outset of the development process, ensuring that design forms part of pre-application consultation of a Proposal'.*

Proposals should promote good design by ensuring development:

- a) Respects and enhances the character of the townscape and any nearby heritage assets;
- b) Provides a high standard of amenity for future and neighbouring occupiers; including maintaining appropriate distances between buildings and the creation of development-free buffer zones between housing and employment uses incorporating means of screening where necessary;
- d) Achieves high levels of sustainability: securing the re-use of existing buildings, making walking and cycling more attractive; providing charging points to encourage the use of electric and low emission vehicles; incorporating adequate facilities to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery that are well designed and visually unobtrusive and allows for the convenient collection of waste;
- e) Minimises the risk of crime by developing overlooked streets, encouraging high levels of activity, and installing well-designed security features;
- f) Accommodates the needs of a range of different users, including disabled people to create accessible and inclusive places;
- h) Encourages biodiversity; and
- i) Retains trees and where appropriate planting new trees and other landscaping.

### **Policy LP35 'Historic environment'**

Policy LP35 advises that development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset such as a conservation area or listed building should seek to preserve or enhance the significance of the asset.

### **Policy LP47 'Healthy, active and safe lifestyles'**

This policy advises that *'The council will, with its partners, create an environment which supports healthy, active and safe communities and reduces inequality. Healthy, active and safe lifestyles will be enabled by facilitating access to a range of high quality, well maintained and accessible open spaces and play, sports, leisure and cultural facilities'.*

### **Policy LP51 'Protection and improvement of local air quality'**

This policy advises that *'Proposals that have the potential to increase local air pollution either individually or cumulatively must be accompanied by evidence to show that the impact of the development has been assessed in accordance with the relevant guidance' and 'Where the development introduces new receptors into Air Quality Management Areas ....the development must incorporate sustainable mitigation measures that protect the new*

*receptors from unacceptable levels of air pollution. Where sustainable mitigation measures cannot be introduced which prevent receptors from being exposed to unsafe levels of air pollution, development will not be permitted’.*

### **Policy LP63 ‘New Open Space’**

This policy provides that *‘The council will seek to secure well-designed new and improved open space, sport and recreation facilities in the district to encourage everyone in Kirklees to be as physically active as possible and promote a healthy lifestyle for all.*

*New housing developments will be required to provide or contribute towards new open space or the improvement of existing provision in the area, unless the developer clearly demonstrates that it is not financially viable for the development proposal. New open space should be provided in accordance with the council’s local open space standards or national standards where relevant.*

*In determining the required open space provision, the council will have regard to the type of housing proposed and the availability, quality and accessibility of open space provision in the area assessed in accordance with the council’s district wide open space standards. The provision of playing pitches will also be considered. This analysis will help determine the need for new on-site or off-site provision, enhancement of existing provision and/or a financial contribution’.*

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD)**

Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. However, as they provide further advice on existing policies in the adopted local plan, they are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

Kirklees MBC have produced a series of SPDs which are material considerations in the determination of planning applications:

Housebuilders Design Guide SPD, June 2021. The document primarily addresses the construction of new buildings rather than the conversion of existing ones although the principles promoted may be applied by the Council to conversion proposals.

Open Space SPD, June 2021. The council will consider the needs arising from the proposed development to determine the appropriate open space required taking into account the nature and type of housing proposed.

Highway Design Guide SPD, November 2019 is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for all residential development including proposals for apartments and student housing.

### **Kirklees Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016**

Observations noted in the SHMA with regard to students and student accommodation, are summarised below:

The rental market near the Town Centre had performed consistently well and agents suggested that this continues to be boosted by the expansion of Huddersfield University which had led to high levels of student demand.

Agents stressed that demand for properties in the Borough had changed in recent years due to a significant increase in student demand.

Estate agents noted that the private rented sector was dominated by student demand which fell largely within a one-mile radius of Huddersfield Town Centre where student demand was noted to be very high.

Agents noted that due to the high level of student demand many landlords were subdividing larger properties into student accommodation to secure higher rental yields.

The demand for student accommodation was confirmed to be a key housing market driver in Huddersfield. The SHMA noted that in 2014/15 there were 21,058 students registered with the University.

A student housing survey was carried out as part of the SHMA. Of those responding, 72% rented privately (including through a student lettings agency) and 16% rented from the university/halls of residence. Findings included:

Strongest preference for students to live in Huddersfield town centre;

26% of respondents felt that there is insufficient choice of student accommodation available; and more respondents would like to rent Purpose Built Student Accommodation than expected to move into such accommodation.

### **Principle of developing Student Accommodation**

The application site is not allocated for a specific use by the adopted Local Plan. The site is located within the existing built-up area of Huddersfield and within the defined Town Centre as delineated by the Local Plan. Given the close proximity of the site to established public transport facilities, cycle routes and pedestrian provision, the site can be regarded as being in an extremely sustainable location easily accessed by non-car modes. The site is also located with 5-10 minutes walk of the University.

Policy LP15 of the Local Plan advises that new living accommodation will be focused in town centre locations including within Huddersfield Town Centre which the application site adjoins. Furthermore Policy LP7 advises that development will be prioritised in favour of previously developed land where it can support sustainable patterns of development and provides access to services by foot, public transport and cycling. In addition to being accessible to Huddersfield University the site has a sustainable and accessible location with convenient access to a wide range of shops, services and amenities provided by the Town Centre which are within walking distance of the site. The site also has very good access by public transport including frequent bus and rail services.

The application site is very close to the Huddersfield University. The justification to Policy LP17 acknowledges that the University of Huddersfield plays an important role in the operation of the town centre. This policy recognises the University brings a significant number of visitors to the town centre, and in recent years has led to the development of town centre and edge of centre student accommodation. This policy is clearly supportive of the development and the proposal will help maximise the potential for town centre living and in addition boost the image of Huddersfield. The provision of high quality accommodation opportunities for students in a prominent position aside the ring road will help facilitate the image of the Town Centre as a dynamic University and market town thereby fulfilling the aims of Policy LP17 which aims to ensure Huddersfield town centre is developed to accommodate high quality educational facilities and student living accommodation.

Policy LP7 of the Kirklees Local Plan encourages the provision of accommodation through the reuse, conversion and adaptation of existing vacant buildings in sustainable urban locations where the land is not of high environmental value and where development does not create conflict with nearby uses. The development of student accommodation on this site is wholly appropriate and compatible with surrounding land uses including the retail and commercial.

Planning policy encourages the development of student living accommodation within and on the edge of the town centre which is considered important as it will help sustain the viability of town centre businesses and

facilities. The development proposes new student studios which once occupied will provide increased footfall in the town centre which will boost the local economy.

NPPF defines main Town Centre uses as '*Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)*'.

Policy LP13 indicates Huddersfield Town Centre will continue be a focus for further and higher education development. The application site abuts the Town Centre where Policy LP15 encourages residential provision, including student accommodation on the upper floors of existing buildings.

The thrust of the NPPF policy, LP7 'Efficient and effective use of land and buildings' and Policy LP20 'Sustainable Travel' is that development which reuses vacant properties that can support sustainable patterns of living accommodation and provide access to services and service centres by foot, public transport and cycling will be strongly supported. The adaption of the building will maximise the potential for Town Centre living and the provision of high quality student accommodation will help improve the image of the Town Centre and encourage visitors to perceive Huddersfield as a dynamic university town.

A town centre site which is within easy walking distance of the University of Huddersfield Campus is regarded to be an appropriate location for student accommodation. It is noted that the development of student living accommodation on the edge of the town centre will help sustain the vitality and viability of town centre businesses, services and facilities. Furthermore the site is previously Paragraph 121 of the NPPF reminds that Local Planning Authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet accommodation needs and in particular, they should support proposals to use former retail and employment land for homes where this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres. The existing building will clearly enhance as opposed to undermine the vitality and viability of Huddersfield Town Centre.

Given the long-term vacancy, and active marketing by Hanson the building is unsuited for reoccupation as an office and should not be retained for this purpose.

### **Design and Townscape**

The application site currently comprises a prominent partly vacant concrete framed office building which is presently faced in brick and concrete. The building clearly has the potential to make a much more positive contribution to the townscape.

Although the existing building is finished in traditional brickwork this does not preclude a contemporary design approach and the use of more contemporary materials. Various contemporary cladding materials are evident on buildings on sites close to the edge of Huddersfield Town Centre and Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and a contemporary high quality design approach is therefore appropriate.

Importantly the ground floor of the building is reimagined and redesigned to accommodate an active ground floor accommodating a range of communal facilities which will be available to the student residents.

The scheme accommodates plant and service accommodation in the basement level allowing the floors above to be given over to active use and providing passive surveillance of the adjacent public realm.

The upper reconfiguration of the roof will enhance the townscape importantly providing an active ground floor frontage to Southgate and improving this part of the ring road and its legacy of vacant and underused sites.

For the above reasons it is concluded that the proposals are in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP24 and the design provisions of the NPPF.

### **Air Quality**

Kirklees Council designated Air Quality Management Area Order No.9 on 1st November 2019 which includes roads within and bordering Huddersfield Ring Road. The application site lies within the designated Air Quality Management Area.

Whilst the full reoccupation of the building as an office is a highly unlikely scenario, this is the extant use of the building. Given the implementation of the student accommodation will remove the office use, the benefits to are substantial and an air quality assessment is not considered to be required in support of this planning application.

As with all large scale conversion projects the development may have the potential to cause air quality impacts through dust emissions during construction. The potential for fugitive dust emissions during construction can however be mitigated by the use of good practice control measures during demolition and construction works.

It is anticipated that the Council's Environmental Services Officers will recommend conditions which seek to ensure the development does not contribute to a decline in air quality. These may include the provision of a Construction Management Plan, the installation of electric vehicle charging points and the provision implementation and monitoring of a Travel Plan.

### **Quality Student Accommodation**

Over previous decades poor quality housing in private sector housing and dated halls of residence with shared rooms, communal bathrooms and cramped conditions were seen as a rite of passage. Expectations have changed markedly within the student accommodation market, particularly so in recent times. Today's students are seeking a higher quality of accommodation than ever before with a dedicated private bathroom being an essential feature rather than a luxury. The days of student rooms being built with shared w/c and bathroom facilities are long gone. Today's PBSA developers are challenged to deliver top quality accommodation with contemporary finishes that are more akin to hotel type accommodation. At the same time students are demanding communal facilities where they can spend downtime relaxing and socialising with friends.

The proposals includes all the facilities and amenities optimised to respond to present market demand.

When submitting applications for student accommodation, expectations regarding room sizes can vary, however the correct approach is a sui generis use, not C3 accommodation. Unlike C3 uses, student accommodation is not intended to provide a permanent residential home. The temporary nature of the accommodation is demonstrated by students typically returning to the parental address during academic breaks. Since the application is not designed as permanent C3 (Dwellings) and will only be available to rent whilst the applicant is a registered student, the Nationally Described Space Standards set against which C3 accommodation are not applicable.

The 'studios' proposed are essentially a multipurpose room with an integrated bathroom, study desk and kitchenette. They are not 1 person C3 apartments and should not be judged against C3 residential space standards which are wholly inappropriate. The studios proposed are flexible spaces designed to serve multiple purposes being a place to relax, to study, to shower, to sleep or prepare a meal. Beyond this personal space, the student tenants will have access to the extensive communal facilities provided within the building including an open plan lounge, coffee bar, leisure facilities, gym and laundry. Personal space within the studios is supplemented by generous communal spaces allowing students to socialise and promote interactions with others.

The conversion proposal shows a choice of studios ranging from between 20m<sup>2</sup> to 34m<sup>2</sup>. Each studio comes with an en-suite bathroom, workstation study desk, convenient plug sockets, wi-fi and kitchen facilities, alongside built in storage.

Kirklees Council are understood not to have adopted a specific policy which student accommodation will be assessed.

It is noted that the studio spaces proposed compare favourably with the studio sizes being sought by authorities elsewhere. Furthermore the residents will benefit from access to communal areas and facilities included within their rentals. The use of the studio spaces are maximised by high quality fitted furniture built in and included within the unit from beds, to wardrobes, study stations and kitchens. The units are ready to occupy and the accommodation sizing is therefore considered to be appropriate.

Student Housing is housing built specifically by private developers for students to live in, usually taking the form of cluster rooms (many rooms with shared kitchen and living areas) or private studios, both with attached communal facilities such as cinemas, gyms and games rooms. Student accommodation is a sui generis use and must not be confused with either standard market housing (C3) or HMOs.

The demand for PBSA is strong across the Country with this type of accommodation increasingly popular with all types of students, domestic and overseas. Importantly the provision of safe and secure accommodation within a modern student building with high quality facilities provides an important source of accommodation for first year students as they leave home for the first time. Parents take comfort in the managed and safe nature of the provision whilst students enjoy independent living in studios or cluster rooms alongside having all the benefits of communal and shared leisure facilities. Across the UK, around 30% of full-time first-year students live in private purpose-built student accommodation, up from 22% five years ago (<https://housinghand.co.uk>). The national shortage is apparent in Huddersfield where a student housing survey carried out as part of the Kirklees Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016 found that more respondents would like to rent purpose-built student accommodation than expected to move into such accommodation.

In Huddersfield the SHMA notes the rental market near the Town Centre had performed consistently well and agents suggested that this continues to be boosted by the expansion of Huddersfield University which had led to high levels of student demand.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published in March 2014 (and has been updated regularly since). The Guidance includes a section which gives LPAs practical advice for considering student housing. Under the heading 'How can student housing needs be assessed?' it advises that 'Strategic policy-making authorities need to plan for sufficient student accommodation whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on campus. Encouraging more dedicated student accommodation may provide low cost housing that takes pressure off the private rented sector and increases the overall housing stock. Strategic policy-making authorities are encouraged to consider options which would support both the needs of the student population as well as local residents before imposing caps or restrictions on students living outside university-provided accommodation. Local Planning Authorities will also need to engage with universities and other higher educational establishments to ensure they understand their student accommodation requirements in their area'. Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 67-004-20190722.

The Kirklees Local Plan Part 1 does not provide specific policy advice in relation to student accommodation or suggest how this use should be designed, planned and catered for. The Kirklees Local Plan Part 2 does not allocate specific land for PBSA however the provision of student accommodation is encouraged by strategic housing policy which seeks to encourage student housing within and close to Huddersfield Town Centre. Policy LP11 of the Local Plan Part 1 notes the Council will seek high quality housing in order to create a mixed and balanced community in line with the latest evidence of housing need (Kirklees Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which shows there to be a lack of student housing locally and particularly close to the Town Centre and University area.

### **Highways, Accessibility and Parking**

The locational accessibility of the site and within the town centre and public transport infrastructure will promote sustainable patterns of travel.

The development will not have a material impact on highway operations or road safety. It is therefore concluded that the development is consistent with Paragraph 105 of the NPPF, and Policy LP21 'Highways and Access' of the Kirklees Local Plan strategy and policies (Part 1).

### **Waste Management and Servicing**

Bin and recycling storage will be provided in a purpose designed store capable of accommodating euro bins to serve the operational needs of the development. Residents will have access to separate bins for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials. Waste collections will take place as existing from the external yard which is accessed from Threadneedle Street which is of sufficient width and length to accommodate a refuse vehicle. The waste and recycling store is proposed to be emptied weekly.

Visually the storage of bins within an allocated area in the yard avoids a requirement to store bins at the front of the building and the associated negative impact this would have on the town centre. The proposed servicing arrangements will ensure the efficient operation of the development.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

The application site is an occupied building within a busy area. No evidence of protected species or nesting birds have been noted on site during site visits.

Overall the site is mainly developed by the existing building and hardstanding areas and can be regarded to be a site of extremely low environmental value.

Given the very low biodiversity potential of the site there are no negative environmental impacts associated with the conversion of the building.

### **Crime and Safety**

Part 1 of the Local Plan sets out a vision for Kirklees in 2031 and defines strategic objectives to secure the delivery of the vision. Strategic Objective 5 aims to help secure the delivery of the vision by seeking to ensure that all residents have the opportunity of a healthy lifestyle, free from crime and can achieve their potential in work and education. The provision of additional student accommodation near Huddersfield University will help underpin the continued growth and success of the University which is recognised to be a major employer within the Borough.

recognises the important role that new development can have in minimising the potential for crime and antisocial behaviour to take place.

The new student accommodation has outlook from all elevations of the building thereby providing passive surveillance of the public realm beyond.

As an experienced provider of Student accommodation, the applicant is keen to highlight that providing a safe and secure environment for student occupation lies at the heart of any successful scheme. Therefore propose to ensure the risk of crime is minimised by installing a range of well-designed security features within the development. Cumulatively these measures will ensure the development benefits from a safe and accessible environment where future occupants' quality of life will not be undermined by crime and disorder or by fear of crime.

The application is therefore consistent with requirements of the NPPF relating to improved safety and reduction of crime and also meets Objective e) of Local Development Plan Policy LP24 'Design' which seeks to minimise the

risk of crime by developing overlooked streets, encouraging high levels of activity, and installing well-designed security features.

### **Economic and Environmental Benefits**

#### **Economic**

Importantly it must be recognised that a shortage of student housing can act as a barrier to the growth of the further education sector which may limit the potential beneficial impact the sector can have on training and allowing local people to progress with education and achieve their full economic potential. The development's provision of 198 student bedrooms will meet the needs of existing and future students and respond to the general shortage of student accommodation locally and particularly of PBSA accommodation.

The proposed development will bring several economic benefits during the conversion and recladding of the building. Economic benefits will also be delivered once the building becomes operational. It is noted that:

Economic benefits for the public will result during the construction stage of the project since the scheme will create opportunities for construction employment, and for the local supply chain.

Economic benefits will accrue for the Town Centre once the building is occupied due to increased local spending by student residents. This activity may help to generate further investment in the surrounding area including investment in other vacant and underused buildings within the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and other areas close by.

Economic public benefits are expected once the development is operational and will likely include job opportunities for people employed to maintain and manage the building. The local supply chain will also benefit through orders placed by the Management Company.

The provision of bespoke student housing may help relieve pressure on the local housing market by providing new accommodation for students and reducing competition for 1 bedroom accommodation locally which may assist local people seeking to rent C3 properties within this area.

In summary together with creating job opportunities during the construction phase and opportunities for the local supply chain, the proposed development will assist existing and future retailers/businesses located in proximity to the site through increased footfall and student spending.

#### **Environmental**

The proposed scheme will have significant environmental benefits as it involves the use of a vacant building and underused brownfield land in a sustainable and accessible location within the town centre. The high-quality design of the facades will ensure that it has a positive impact on the street scene and wider area. The site's accessible location will help reduce dependency on private vehicles and reduce CO2 emissions and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. The proposed conversion will utilise passive design techniques and utilise building fabric to secure energy savings

In accordance with the provisions of the NPPF the proposed scheme will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through the delivery of positive economic, social and environmental benefits.

#### **S106 Statement and CIL**

The proposals are to convert and extend an existing vacant building to accommodate a PSBA. Our appraisal of the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Documents suggests:

An 'Affordable Housing Contribution' is not applicable to a bespoke purpose-built student accommodation building development.

'Education Contributions' are not applicable as the accommodation is for occupation by single persons only. Student occupants will not have resident children and therefore the development will not place increased demand on primary or secondary school places.

'Transport and Highways Contributions' are not applicable as no physical improvements works to pedestrian, cycle and highway connections which are confirmed by the Transport Statement to be comprehensive. A Travel plan contribution is anticipated to be required to secure a financial contribution towards Travel plan monitoring by the Council.

'Public Realm/Open Space Contributions'. The Council SPD suggests that student accommodation is exempt from three categories of Open Space contribution: 'Allotments', 'Children & young people' and 'Outdoor sports facilities'. The students living within the development will use University sports facilities and will not place additional demands Council sports facilities. In anticipation of a local deficit of 'Parks/recreation grounds' or 'Amenity greenspaces', so as not to place increased demand on public facilities, the development includes a roof garden to cater for residents wishing to use an amenity space. The space to be provided will be of a high-quality design and unlike a public park will respond directly to student needs, importantly providing a safe and secure environment. For these reasons a contribution to 'Public Realm/Open Space Contributions' is deemed to be unnecessary.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a financial levy that can be set on developments to provide for essential infrastructure to support planned growth. Kirklees set about preparing a draft CIL charging schedule and consulting on the document which was the subject of an independent examination with an examiners report published in January 2021. A CIL 'update' from January 2021 on the Council web site notes that the adoption of CIL was discussed by the Kirklees Council Cabinet on 19 January 2021 when the decision was that as the government has stated an intention to replace CIL with a nationally set Infrastructure Levy, the council would not adopt a CIL Charging Schedule. Furthermore it is noted by the CIL Examiners report at Para. 46 that CIL should not be applied to student development.

### **Conclusion**

The proposal is for the change of use as a student accommodation building. Small rooftop extension is proposed to the existing building but this is only in a small aspect. The building which has been underused for many years and is presently largely vacant.

This Planning Statement has considered all relevant planning issues associated with the proposal and confirms that the scheme accords with the provisions of national and local planning policy guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); the policies of the Kirklees Local Plan strategy and policies (Parts 1 and 2) adopted 27 February 2019; and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents. Importantly it is demonstrated that there would be no adverse issues associated with the development that would outweigh the benefits of the proposal. On this basis, the proposed scheme fully accords with national and local planning policy guidance.