



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Change of Use from a C3 Dwellinghouse to a Large House in Multiple Occupation

(Sui Generis — up to 22 occupants)

108–110 Halifax Old Road, Huddersfield

Prepared in support of a full planning application to Kirklees Council

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared in support of a full planning application submitted to Kirklees Council for the change of use of 108–110 Halifax Old Road, Huddersfield, from its existing lawful use as a C3 dwellinghouse to provide a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodating up to 22 individuals living independently within a single managed household arrangement. As the proposal involves more than six unrelated occupants, the use falls outside Use Class C4 and is properly categorised as sui generis, requiring the benefit of an express grant of planning permission.

This Statement should be read alongside the accompanying application drawings, plans and supporting documents. It explains the design principles and concepts applied to the proposed development, demonstrates how the proposal responds to its context, and sets out how the development addresses the issue of access for all prospective occupants and visitors, in accordance with Article 9 and Schedule 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

2. The Site and Surrounding Context

108–110 Halifax Old Road comprises a pair of substantial Victorian dwellings located on Halifax Old Road, within a short distance of Huddersfield town centre and the University of Huddersfield campus. The wider area is characterised by large, traditionally-built properties of a scale typical of this period of development, many of which have already transitioned to shared and multiple-occupancy living arrangements reflecting changing housing demand in the locality.

The site benefits from excellent accessibility, being within comfortable walking distance of the town centre, retail and leisure facilities, healthcare provision, and frequent public transport services along Halifax Old Road and the surrounding highway network. This location is particularly well suited to occupants who do not rely on private car ownership, including students, young professionals and single people seeking affordable, well-connected accommodation.

3. The Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the combined property from Use Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to a large HMO, providing self-contained, en-suite bedrooms with shared communal living, kitchen and amenity space, accommodating a maximum of 22 occupants. Each bedroom will be fully furnished and connected to Wi-Fi, with rents inclusive of utility bills, offering a genuinely 'ready to move in' housing product.

The proposal responds directly to a well-evidenced and growing need for this type of accommodation in Huddersfield, discussed further in Section 4 below.

4. Housing Need and Justification for the Proposed Use

The existing dwellings at 108–110 Halifax Old Road are large, traditional Victorian houses of a scale that is increasingly ill-suited to modern single-family occupation. Average household sizes have fallen consistently over recent decades, reflecting later family formation, higher rates of separation and divorce, and a growing preference among younger people to live independently rather than remain in, or return to, the family home. Houses of this size and configuration are frequently too large, too expensive to heat and maintain, and too impractical in layout for the modern nuclear or single-occupant household, making them well suited instead to reconfiguration as high-quality shared accommodation.

There is a clear and growing need for exactly this type of accommodation in Huddersfield and the wider district. In particular, the proposal is intended to meet demand from several distinct groups, including:

- People experiencing relationship or family breakdown who require good-quality, ready-to-move, fully furnished accommodation at short notice, without the burden of arranging utilities, furnishings or long lead-in times;

- Young people seeking their first independent home, for whom a fully inclusive, affordable, low-commitment tenancy removes many of the practical and financial barriers to leaving the family home;
- Students at the University of Huddersfield, given the site's proximity to the campus and town centre;
- Workers relocating to Huddersfield for employment, who require flexible, high-quality accommodation without the delay and expense of establishing a new household from scratch;
- Cost-conscious single people and young professionals who value hassle-free renting inclusive of bills, and who are likely to rely on walking, cycling and public transport rather than private car use.

HMOs of this kind play an important role in providing a balanced housing mix within the District, particularly for those who are unable to access other tenures. Given the well-documented rise in single-person households and the increasing prevalence of family breakdown, HMO accommodation of this type has a clear and continuing role to play in meeting Huddersfield's future housing requirements, complementing rather than displacing conventional family housing in the area.

The proposal will deliver good-quality, affordable housing that will be fully vetted and licensable by Kirklees Council under the mandatory HMO licensing regime, ensuring that management, safety and amenity standards are independently verified and maintained throughout the life of the use.

5. Amount, Layout and Internal Design

The proposed layout provides individual en-suite bedrooms for each occupant, together with shared communal living and kitchen/dining facilities designed to encourage a sense of community while preserving individual privacy. All bedrooms will be fully furnished to a good standard and connected to Wi-Fi, and each will meet or exceed the minimum room sizes set out in Kirklees Council's HMO amenity standards and the mandatory licensing conditions under the Housing Act 2004. Full room-by-room dimensions and areas are set out on the accompanying floor plans.

Internal alterations necessary to facilitate the proposed layout will be confined largely to the reconfiguration of non-structural partitions and the provision of additional en-suite facilities, retaining the principal historic form, character and external appearance of the two Victorian dwellings.

6. Design and External Appearance

The proposal is a change of use and does not involve significant external alteration to the buildings. The existing external appearance, materials, roofline and boundary treatments will be retained, preserving the character of the properties and their contribution to the streetscene along Halifax Old Road.

7. Heritage and Historic Character

108–110 Halifax Old Road is a pair of substantial properties of traditional Victorian construction, contributing positively through its scale, proportions, materials and detailing to the historic character of Halifax Old Road and the wider streetscene. The retention and continued beneficial use of this building stock, rather than redevelopment, is itself a positive heritage outcome, ensuring the long-term preservation of a well-built and characterful historic property.

The proposed development is a change of use only. No external changes will be made to the building — its external walls, roof, windows, doors, materials, detailing and overall form will be retained entirely as existing. The only physical works proposed are internal, comprising the adjustment of non-structural internal partitions to create the proposed bedroom and communal layout. As such, the historic fabric, external appearance and architectural character of the building will be fully preserved, and the proposal will have no adverse impact on the heritage significance of the property or its contribution to the character of the surrounding area.

The minor works described in Section 9 below to form a dropped kerb and adjust a short section of the front boundary wall to facilitate off-street parking are works of access and highway safety rather than alteration to the building itself, and have been kept to the minimum necessary to facilitate a safe and functional parking arrangement, respecting the character of the frontage.

8. Access

8.1 Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

Existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements to the site will be retained. Halifax Old Road provides safe and convenient pedestrian access to the site frontage, and the existing vehicular access and any hardstanding areas will continue to serve the property.

8.2 Public Transport, Walking and Cycling

The site's central and highly accessible location, close to Huddersfield town centre, the University campus and frequent public transport services, is a key part of the design rationale. The proposed occupant profile — students, young professionals and single people — is expected to rely predominantly on walking, cycling and public transport rather than private car use, consistent with sustainable travel objectives for the District.

9. Parking, Cycle Storage and Refuse Management

The site will provide 12 off-street parking spaces, together with dedicated, secure and covered cycle storage to encourage sustainable travel among occupants who are unlikely to rely on private car ownership. To facilitate this provision, the existing boundary wall to the frontage will be adjusted and a new dropped kerb formed to provide safe and convenient vehicular access from Halifax Old Road.

A dedicated cycle store will be provided to the rear of the property, offering secure, covered and easily accessible cycle parking for occupants.

Refuse and recycling will be managed via dedicated communal trade bins, stored in a designated bin store to the rear of the property and set out for weekly collection in accordance with Kirklees Council's commercial/communal waste collection arrangements. The management company will retain responsibility for ensuring bins are presented and returned promptly and that the storage area is kept clean and tidy at all times.

10. Management and Operation

The application is brought forward by experienced HMO landlords with an established track record of operating well-managed, licensed HMO accommodation. The applicant's existing administrative and management infrastructure — covering tenant vetting, rent collection, maintenance and complaint-handling — will be applied to this property from the outset.

Prospective occupants will be required to undergo a structured application and referencing process prior to being granted a tenancy, including identity verification, references and background/suitability checks, with the aim of securing sustainable, long-term tenancies and a stable occupant community. This is intended to minimise turnover and reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.

The property will be professionally and proactively managed on an ongoing basis, including:

- Regular cleaning and maintenance of all communal areas, including kitchens, living areas, bin stores and cycle stores;

- A clear, accessible route for occupants and neighbours to report maintenance issues or concerns;
- A firm and proactive approach to any anti-social behaviour, including a clear tenancy agreement setting out expected standards of behaviour and a swift, structured response to any breaches;
- Routine inspection of the property to ensure fire safety, health and safety, and amenity standards are maintained to at least the standard required for HMO licensing;
- Ongoing liaison with Kirklees Council's HMO licensing and environmental health teams.

The property will be licensed as a large HMO under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004, ensuring that fire safety, amenity standards, management arrangements and occupant welfare are subject to independent verification and periodic inspection by the Local Authority throughout the life of the use.

11. Sustainability

The proposal makes efficient use of existing built form, avoiding the need for new construction and the associated embodied carbon impact, while bringing large, under-utilised residential floorspace back into efficient, high-occupancy use. The site's sustainable, central location minimises reliance on private car travel, and the shared-living model inherently reduces per-occupant energy and resource consumption relative to equivalent single-household occupation of properties of this size.

12. Planning Policy Considerations

The proposal has been designed to accord with the relevant policies of the Kirklees Local Plan and national planning policy, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the objective of delivering a mix of housing types to meet the needs of all sections of the community, including single people and those unable to access conventional family housing.

Subject to the detailed matters identified above being confirmed and incorporated into the application drawings and supporting evidence base, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development that will make efficient use of an existing large residential property, deliver a well-managed and needed form of housing, and preserve the character and appearance of the host buildings and surrounding streetscene.

13. Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed change of use of 108–110 Halifax Old Road from Use Class C3 to a large HMO accommodating up to 22 occupants represents a well-considered, appropriately managed and genuinely needed form of housing for Huddersfield. The proposal makes efficient use of large, under-utilised Victorian housing stock that is increasingly unsuited to single-family occupation, responds to clear and growing demand from those experiencing family breakdown, young people seeking independence, students and relocating workers, and will be delivered and managed by an experienced and capable operator to a high standard, subject to HMO licensing by Kirklees Council.

For the reasons set out above, it is respectfully submitted that the proposal accords with the principles of sustainable development and should be supported.