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Dear Sir / Madam

## **SUPPORTING PLANNING REPORT FOR PLANNING APPLICATION - USE OF EXISTING HMO AS 9-BED HMO FOR 10 OCCUPANTS, AT 58 BRIGHTON STREET, COVENTRY**

This Report is in support of the above planning application.

### **Application Proposal and recent history**

The planning application proposes to change the use of the property and to use the roof space of this detached property to create a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) with 9 bedrooms for 10 occupants, together with a shared living / kitchen area. The application site is located on the corner of Brighton Street and Hastings Road and has a long-standing use as a shared house or small HMO (Class C4) with 6 occupants,



The planning application proposes 4 bedrooms, a kitchen / lounge, bathroom and WC at ground floor; a further 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms at first floor and a bedroom in the roof space, which would be suitable for 2 occupants. The only external alteration would be altering a single first floor window facing Hastings Road into two smaller windows, which would align with the existing ground floor windows below (and was previously approved), and forming three roof lights in the Brighton Street elevation and two roof lights on the elevation facing the gable of 4 Hastings Road.

Parking in the locality is mostly on-street. The site has no on-site car parking spaces and the application proposes storage for 5 cycles, together with amenity space to the rear of the site.

The property has an extant, unimplemented planning permission for an 8-bedroom HMO (*sui generis*), which was approved on 27 February 2019 (FUL/2018/3518).

The recent planning history also includes an extant, unimplemented planning permission for *“Demolition of two garages and erection of three flats”* on the adjoining plot of land which was approved on 10 June 2019 (FUL/2019/0926).

### **Relevant Planning Policies and Assessment of the proposal**

The site is in a highly sustainable location and, as it is located in an established residential area, the proposed use is considered to be compatible and appropriate.

The proposed development would accord with the overriding principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and with the relevant Policies in the Coventry Local Plan, which was adopted on 6 December 2017.

The NPPF was published in 2019 and clearly states from the outset that ‘at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development’.

Paragraphs 7-11 of the NPPF confirm the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of the policy requirements in the Coventry Local Plan, the site is located within an established residential area. It is in a highly sustainable location and would comply with the NPPF and the criteria in Policy H3 of the Local Plan, given that the site is located within easy reach of Ball Hill District Centre (which has shops and local amenities and is a 5 minute walk and 2 minute cycle ride away). The site is also located close to Far Gosford Street Centre (which is a 9 minute walk and 3 minute cycle ride away); local Primary and Secondary Schools; and a full range of local amenities, public open space and facilities.

The application site is within easy reach of bus stops on Walsgrave Road and Swan Lane which give access to the City Centre and Coventry University (services 4, 6, 6A, 8, 8A and 85). There are also safe and convenient walking and cycling routes to Coventry City Centre (which is 20 minutes and 6 minutes away, respectively) and Coventry University campus (which is 16 minutes and 5 minutes away, respectively). The area is pedestrian-friendly with wide, safe, well-lit footpaths

Paragraphs 124-131 of the NPPF encourage good design and aim to ensure development will add to the quality of an area; establish a strong sense of place to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Policy H11: Homes in Multiple Occupation (HiMO's) states -

*“The development of purpose built HiMO's or the conversion of existing homes or non-residential properties to large HiMO's will not be permitted in areas where the proposals would materially harm:*

- a) *the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties (including the provision of suitable parking provisions);*
- b) *the appearance or character of an area; and*
- c) *local services; and*
- d) *The amenity value and living standards of future occupants of the property, having specific regard to internal space and garden/amenity space.*

In summary, the application would meet the criteria in Policy H11. The additional residents would not impact on the amenities of nearby properties; the application is accompanied by a Parking Survey which demonstrates that a significant amount of on-street parking is available in the immediate locality to cater for the demands of additional residents (and also those of the 3 flats which have permission on the adjacent plot of land); the application would have no significant impact on the appearance or character of the area or local services; and would continue to provide a high standard of living conditions for future occupants.

In terms of the **impact on the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties**, the application would increase the occupancy of this existing HMO, which has permission for 8 occupants, by providing one further room for 2 additional occupants. The property has a longstanding use as a small HMO and has planning permission for an 8-bedroom HMO (sui generis), which was approved on 27 February 2019 (FUL/2018/3518). This application proposes to add a further bedroom in the existing roof space which would increase the size of the property to 9-bedrooms for 10 occupants. It is considered that it is large enough to cater for two further additional occupants in the existing roof space without impacting on the character of the area.

The property is considered to be detached, apart from the single storey kitchen / lounge which adjoins No.4 Hastings Road. However, whilst the proposed use would increase the number of occupants it is not considered this would be detrimental to the living conditions of neighbouring residents. It is considered that any demonstrable harm from 2 additional occupants would be minimal and difficult to distinguish.

The property is set away from adjacent dwellings. The property has a centrally located front door set several metres from the respective shared boundaries with the nearest neighbouring property at 4 Hastings Road and has a private, walled rear garden adjacent to the blank gable and rear outrigger of No.4, which runs the length of the application site and provides a screen between the two properties.

The application site is a larger property than many in the locality and could, otherwise, comfortably be used to provide accommodation for an extended family. Therefore, having two further occupants above the permitted 8 occupants is not considered to result in any perceptible increase in the use or intensity of occupancy for a property of this scale.

Whilst any increase in the number of occupants can be perceived as a source of increased disturbance, and the general activities and comings and goings associated with a HMO seen as being worse than the activity patterns of a family dwelling, it is difficult to provide evidence to demonstrate this. A large family dwelling could typically have parents, young children, older children / young adults and grandparents / extended family all living at the property, all of whom have different activity patterns and make use of internal communal areas of a dwelling at different times of day. It is considered unlikely that the two additional occupants would materially change the nature of comings or goings above the existing level.

Examples of “*increased noise and disturbance*” that are sometimes cited as being potential sources of disturbance to neighbours might include “*car doors and front doors opening and closing*” and “*the slamming of car doors and entering and exiting the building at certain times including throughout the night*”. However, it is considered that these are also comments that can be attributable to the comings and goings associated with normal family living, particularly within an extended family unit where children, young adults and adults are typically resident at the dwelling. A large family dwelling of this nature could typically have parents, young children, older children / young adults and grandparents / extended family all living at the property, all of whom generate different comings and goings and activity patterns at different times of day.

Other examples of “*increased noise and disturbance*” that can be cited as being potential sources of disturbance to neighbours might include “*the greater the number of residents, the wider the circle of friends is likely to be. Visits may take place throughout the day and evening and, taking account of the student lifestyle, such activity may take place throughout the day and well into the evening and beyond.*” Again, it is not considered that such examples are exclusive to a HMO as they can also be made in respect of the comings and goings associated with normal family living within an extended family unit where children, young adults and adults are typically resident at the dwelling.

The comings and goings associated with normal family life can include the following examples throughout the day and the evening, many of which could be car borne:-

- parents trips to and from work;
- parents social, recreational and family trips;
- trips to take younger children to and from school, other activities, visits to friends and visits from a potentially wide circle of friends and relatives to the dwelling;
- independent trips generated by older children / young adults living at the property and their potentially wide circle of friend and relatives;
- independent trips generated by grandparents / extended family living at the property and their potentially wide circle of friend and relatives.

As regards potential disturbance from “*car doors slamming*”, it is considered that car ownership amongst students would be no higher than that of a family group. The close proximity of a site like this to the City Centre and Coventry University and its sustainable location means car ownership would be likely to be lower than that of a typical large family dwelling.

Therefore, it is not considered that the levels of coming and going associated with a HMO with 9-bedrooms and 10 occupants would be distinguishable from that of a large family residence.

Furthermore, general comings and goings and behaviour could be restricted or reasonably conditioned by planning conditions (e.g. relating to the maximum number of occupants and the submission of a Student Management Plan or tenancy agreements (with clauses ending the tenancy if anti-social behaviour occurs) which are available and widely used by Local Planning Authorities and landlords to minimise or control the impact of such disturbance on neighbours.

Setting aside the comparisons between a HMO and a family dwelling, it is considered difficult to define how two additional occupants would demonstrably or significantly impact on comings and goings and disturbance over and above the permitted 8 occupants.

The application property is considered to be detached apart from the single storey kitchen / lounge which adjoins No.4 Hastings Road. It is located on a large corner plot and set in an

uncharacteristically large plot for the locality with the centrally located front door set several metres from the respective shared boundaries. The rear garden is secluded and screened from the adjacent dwellings. Therefore, in the context of its setting, the applicant does not consider that the impact or comings and goings of two additional occupants would be perceptible to neighbouring residents.

The applicant is mindful of recent planning decisions in Coventry where the use of properties of a similar scale to 58 Brighton Street to provide 2 additional occupants has been seen as acceptable. Inspectors have regularly considered that an *“increase in two persons is unlikely to result in demonstrable or severe harm to nearby residential amenity.”* and that such proposals are *“acceptable in terms of the impact on residential amenity”*.

Applying the same reasoning to the application at 58 Brighton Street, the applicant considers that the impact of two additional occupants would, also, not necessarily be any greater.

Looking at other matters, the additional bedroom in the roof space would require only minimal internal work. The property has been used as a shared house with 6 occupants for several years, yet an inspection of the property from the street does not distinguish it from any other properties in the locality. There is no evidence of poor maintenance, or excessive amounts of bin storage or of excessive car parking that can characterise some HMO uses. It is difficult to see how additional occupants would alter this.

Policy H11 also requires suitable parking provision. In respect of **parking and highway safety**, the property has permission for a HMO with 8 occupants. The application proposes one additional bedroom and 2 additional occupants. Policy AC1 (Accessible Transport Network) of the Coventry Local Plan requires development which is expected to generate additional trips to integrate with existing transport networks and Policy AC3 (Demand Management) requires the provision of car parking to be assessed on the basis of the Parking Standards set out in Appendix 5.

The existing dwelling is used as a shared house or small HMO (Class C4) with 6 bedrooms. These standards in the City Council’s Local Plan would have a maximum requirement of up to 5 spaces, however, no on-site parking spaces are available. The proposed use as a 9-bed HMO for 10 occupants would have a maximum requirement for 7 car parking spaces and 3 cycle spaces. Therefore, the proposed development would generate a need for 2 additional parking space. 5 cycles stands are proposed in the enclosed and secure rear garden, which is accessible to all residents.

The application is accompanied by a Parking Survey which demonstrates that this section of Brighton Street is not heavily parked at all, probably due to the road ceasing to be a ‘through route’ following the construction of the A444. Significant amounts of on-street parking spaces were regularly available on Brighton Street within easy reach of the site (between 31 and 38 spaces or 70% and 86% of the 44 available spaces). Whilst the Survey shows that Hastings Road is more heavily parked, spaces were also available there if residents of the proposed development were to choose to keep a car at the site (between 6 and 17 spaces or 19% and 55% of the 31 available spaces were available).

Therefore, the Survey demonstrates that there is capacity to cater for the additional parking demands of both the proposed use (2 additional spaces) and the demands of the 3 flats on the adjacent plot of land (which would require up to 8 additional parking spaces).

The application proposes a HMO in an established residential area which is in a highly sustainable location. The application site is within easy reach of bus stops on Walsgrave Road and Swan Lane which give access to the City Centre and Coventry University (services 4, 6, 6A, 8, 8A and 85). There are also safe and convenient walking and cycling routes to Coventry City Centre (which is 20 minutes and 6 minutes away, respectively) and Coventry University campus (which is 16 minutes and 5 minutes away, respectively). The area is pedestrian-friendly with wide, safe, well-lit footpaths connecting the site to the Ball Hill District Centre (which has shops and local amenities and is a 5 minute walk and 2 minute cycle ride away). The site is also located close to Far Gosford Street Centre (which is a 9 minute walk and 3 minute cycle ride away).

The applicant does, however, consider that the nature of the accommodation is such that it would be mostly suitable for students, and it is unlikely that all residents of the proposed development will choose to keep a car at the property, given the highly sustainable location of the site and its close proximity to Ball Hill District Centre, Coventry University and Coventry City Centre. A recent travel study carried out on behalf of Warwick University, for example, indicated that only 7.8% of undergraduates drive to campus with a further 1.8% as passengers. Based on figures in the TRICS database for a HMO in this location, it is suggested that the trip generation would be unlikely to exceed six or eight vehicular movements per day, but would not be significantly greater than a family dwelling.

Having regard to the small nature and location of the proposed development, it is not considered that a specific management or allocation system is required for parking in this development or that the proposed development generates any requirement for a Residents Parking Zone.

Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Guidance, 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". In this case, the impact of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and would not be severe.

In this case, the nature and location of the development and the findings of the Parking Survey demonstrates that significant numbers of on-street parking spaces are regularly available within easy reach of the site, such that the impact of the proposed development, together with the 3 proposed flats on the adjacent site, is considered to be acceptable and would not be severe. Therefore, the application proposal would be in accordance with the NPPF and Policies AC1 and AC3 of the Coventry Local Plan.

In terms of clarifying the impact on the **appearance or character of an area**, Policy DE1 (Ensuring High Quality Design) also states that proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area. In this case, the only external alterations would be altering a single first floor window facing Hastings Road into two smaller windows, which would align with the existing ground floor windows below and improve the appearance (which was previously approved), and additional roof lights in the Brighton Street elevation and the elevation facing 4 Hastings Road. The alterations would have minimal impact on the appearance of the property.

The proposed use proposes a small modification to the property by the addition of two residents. This would not have a negative impact on **local services** and, if anything, the addition of two residents would contribute positively to the local economy.

In terms of the amenity value and **living standards of future occupants** of the property (having specific regard to internal space and garden/amenity space), room sizes would be between 10.7 sq.m and 16.2 sq.m and there would be separate bathrooms and WCs and a 20.4 sq.m shared lounge and kitchen. The property would continue to have its main entrance to Hastings Road and access to a private walled rear garden, thereby providing a suitable, high quality environment for future occupants.

The proposals would, therefore, accord with Policies DE1 and H3 of the Local Plan and any relevant guidelines for New Residential Development.

As regards other matters, the site is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. The site is not within a Conservation Area or an Archaeological Constraint Area and there are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments in the locality. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site, nor is any planting affected by the proposed development.

### **Conclusion**

The application would use this large existing HMO, which has permission for 8 occupants, to provide space for one additional bedroom within the existing roof space and 2 additional residents. The property is located in a highly sustainable location within an established residential area. The application would accord with Policy H11 in the Local Plan as it would have an acceptable impact on the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties; the application is accompanied by a Parking Survey which demonstrates that a significant amount of on-street parking is available in the immediate locality to cater for the extra demands of additional residents; the application proposes only minor external works and would have no significant impact on the appearance or character of the area or local services; and it would continue to provide a high standard of living conditions for future occupants. Therefore, it would accord with the requirements of policies in the Coventry Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and it is considered that planning permission should be granted.

Kind regards,  
Richard Sykes  
for Sykes Planning Ltd