MIDIAN
ARCHITECTURE & BUILD

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE FROM A SINGLE RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGHOUSE (USE CLASS C3) TO A SIX-PERSON HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (USE CLASS C4)

59 WOLSELEY ROAD, ROMFORD, RM7 0BS

Prepared by: Midian Architecture

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Havering

Planning Enforcement Reference: ENF/101/25

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Midian Architecture in support of a planning application relating to the continued use and internal reconfiguration of the residential property at 59 Wolseley Road, Romford, RM7 0BS, as a six-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to explain the design principles, spatial considerations, accommodation arrangements, accessibility provisions and residential amenity improvements underpinning the proposed development. It demonstrates how the proposed internal reconfiguration has been carefully considered in response to the physical characteristics of the existing building, the requirements of its intended occupants and the planning considerations associated with its continued occupation as shared residential accommodation.

1.3 The proposals seek to establish a coherent, functional and appropriately managed form of shared residential accommodation accommodating a maximum of six individual residents. The development has been designed around the retention and more efficient utilisation of the existing building, without reliance upon an extension, an increase in the number of bedrooms or a material alteration to the established external built form.

1.4 The application is particularly concerned with the qualitative improvement of the accommodation provided. Rather than introducing additional bedrooms or seeking to intensify residential occupation beyond the proposed six-person capacity, the design prioritises the provision of more substantial communal facilities, a clearer distinction between private and shared accommodation, the rationalisation of internal circulation and the establishment of an improved relationship between individual bedrooms and facilities intended for collective use.

1.5 Particular attention has been directed towards the provision of meaningful communal accommodation. The revised drawings identify a principal kitchen, living and dining room measuring approximately 21.22 square metres at ground-floor level, together with an additional communal living room measuring approximately 7.42 square metres at first-floor level. These spaces provide approximately 28.64 square metres of designated communal accommodation distributed across the two principal residential floors.

1.6 This arrangement represents an important element of the design strategy. The availability of a principal shared kitchen, dining and living facility, supplemented by a separate communal room at first-floor level, is intended to offer residents greater flexibility in carrying out ordinary domestic activities without reliance upon their individual bedrooms for every aspect of daily living.

1.7 The application must also be understood in its relevant planning and enforcement context. The property is associated with enforcement investigation reference ENF/101/25, and the present proposals seek to place before the Local Planning Authority a clearly articulated and assessable scheme which directly addresses matters of residential accommodation quality, shared facilities, occupation intensity and the suitability of the existing premises for the proposed use.

1.8 This Statement does not suggest that the existence of the current building, or the absence of physical extensions, automatically establishes the planning acceptability of its proposed use. Rather, it explains why the design and layout represent a proportionate and considered approach to the adaptation of the existing building, and how the proposed occupation and internal arrangements can be assessed against relevant planning considerations.

1.9 The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Planning Statement, the existing and proposed architectural drawings, the site location information and any supporting technical or operational documentation submitted with the application. The Planning Statement addresses the wider planning balance and relevant policy considerations, whereas this document concentrates upon the physical, functional and accessibility characteristics of the development.

1.10 Although a Design and Access Statement is not necessarily a statutory requirement for a change-of-use application of this nature, its voluntary submission provides the Council with a structured explanation of the design process and the considerations informing the proposed accommodation. The approach reflects the principles of design assessment identified in national Planning Practice Guidance and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

2.0 Site Location and Existing Context

2.1 The application site comprises the established residential property known as 59 Wolseley Road, Romford, RM7 0BS, situated within the administrative boundary of the London Borough of Havering.

2.2 The property forms part of an established residential environment in which the character and appearance of existing dwellings, the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, patterns of residential activity and the use of the surrounding highway network are relevant considerations.

2.3 The design approach recognises the importance of maintaining an appropriate relationship between the application property and its immediate residential surroundings. The development does not seek to establish a visually prominent new building, introduce additional built mass or fundamentally alter the existing physical relationship between the premises and adjoining residential properties.

2.4 The site is already occupied by a building of residential scale and domestic architectural character. The design strategy has therefore been based upon the principle that the existing residential structure should remain the principal physical framework for the proposed accommodation, with improvements achieved through internal spatial reorganisation rather than additional construction.

2.5 This approach avoids introducing new external building elements that might otherwise require separate assessment in relation to bulk, height, overshadowing, loss of outlook, enclosure, architectural compatibility or visual prominence within the surrounding streetscape.

2.6 The design responds to the particular constraints associated with converting or adapting existing domestic accommodation. Such buildings were not necessarily originally constructed with contemporary shared-living arrangements in mind. As a result, the suitability of their internal layouts must be carefully considered, particularly where accommodation is intended to be occupied by several individuals forming separate households.

2.7 In this instance, the proposed layout has been developed to provide six private sleeping rooms, associated sanitary facilities and identifiable shared living accommodation within the existing building envelope.

2.8 The design also acknowledges that the provision of shared accommodation in an established residential setting must be approached with sensitivity. The successful integration of an HMO depends not simply upon the number of bedrooms provided, but also upon the relationship between those bedrooms, the quality and accessibility of communal facilities, the organisation of servicing arrangements, the conduct of the residential use and the ability of the building to function without giving rise to unacceptable effects upon surrounding properties.

2.9 Accordingly, the proposed design seeks to preserve the building's domestic physical character while establishing an internal arrangement more specifically suited to the practical needs of six individual residents.

3.0 Existing Building and Accommodation Arrangement

3.1 The submitted existing drawings identify the accommodation and internal configuration of the property prior to the proposed reorganisation.

3.2 The existing accommodation contains six bedrooms with associated en-suite sanitary facilities, together with kitchen accommodation distributed between the principal residential floors.

3.3 An important consideration in the assessment of the existing arrangement is whether sufficient space is provided for residents to undertake ordinary domestic activities collectively, including preparing meals, dining, socialising and spending time away from their private bedrooms.

3.4 Where accommodation is occupied by several individuals, the provision of individual sleeping rooms alone cannot reasonably be regarded as a complete measure of accommodation quality. Shared residential occupation requires an appropriate balance between private accommodation and facilities that support the everyday domestic and social requirements of the household.

3.5 The existing internal arrangement has therefore been reviewed with a particular focus upon the relationship between bedroom provision and the amount, distribution and functionality of shared accommodation.
3.6 The revised design recognises that six residents require a communal environment capable of supporting overlapping domestic routines. Residents may wish to prepare food at similar times, use shared dining accommodation, relax outside their bedrooms or undertake different activities simultaneously.

3.7 The importance of these arrangements extends beyond convenience. Where shared living facilities are inadequate, excessive reliance may be placed upon individual sleeping rooms, potentially reducing the quality of residential accommodation and limiting opportunities for ordinary communal interaction.

3.8 The design response has consequently concentrated on reallocating existing internal space to create identifiable communal rooms, while retaining the proposed six-bedroom occupation level and associated individual sanitary accommodation.

3.9 This is a materially different design emphasis from one that seeks to maximise bedroom numbers or increase the number of individual letting units. The present proposal is directed towards improving the balance and functionality of the accommodation within the existing building.

3.10 The design rationale is therefore founded upon qualitative residential improvement rather than expansion of the premises or additional residential capacity.

4.0 Design Objectives and Development Principles

4.1 The overarching design objective is to establish a functional, sustainable and appropriately integrated six-bedroom HMO within the existing property, with particular emphasis upon the quality of shared accommodation and the efficient use of available internal floorspace.

4.2 The design has been guided by the principle of retaining the existing building envelope and avoiding unnecessary extensions or physical alterations that could affect the character and appearance of the surrounding residential area.

4.3 A further fundamental objective is the provision of accommodation suitable for a maximum of six individual residents, with each bedroom intended for single occupancy. This provides a clearly defined proposed occupation capacity against which communal facilities, sanitary arrangements, internal circulation and potential residential activity can be assessed.

4.4 The design also seeks to ensure that the communal accommodation forms an integral and identifiable component of the internal arrangement, rather than an incidental or residual area remaining after bedroom accommodation has been allocated.

4.5 In practical terms, this has informed the provision of a substantial principal shared living, kitchen and dining room at ground-floor level, supplemented by additional communal living accommodation at first-floor level.

4.6 The allocation of communal space across two floors is intended to improve accessibility to shared facilities for occupants accommodated at different levels, while providing additional flexibility in the manner in which communal activities are undertaken.

4.7 An additional objective is to maintain a clear functional distinction between sleeping accommodation, sanitary facilities, communal activities and circulation. This assists residents in understanding how the premises are intended to operate and reduces unnecessary functional overlap between private and communal areas.

4.8 The proposed retention of individual en-suite facilities is intended to provide privacy and convenience for residents, while allowing the principal kitchen, dining and living facilities to operate as genuine shared spaces.

4.9 The design seeks to reduce pressure upon shared sanitary facilities by maintaining the provision of en-suite accommodation within each bedroom. The resulting arrangement allows residents to undertake personal hygiene activities privately without competing for a single communal bathroom.

4.10 The proposals have also been developed on the understanding that design quality must be considered in conjunction with operational management. A functional internal layout provides the physical foundation for successful shared accommodation, but its effectiveness must be supported by appropriate maintenance, occupation controls, waste arrangements and reasonable management procedures.

4.11 The development therefore represents an approach in which the physical design, proposed occupancy and management of the premises are intended to operate together rather than being considered as entirely separate matters.

5.0 Amount of Development and Proposed Occupancy

5.1 The application proposes the continued use and internal reconfiguration of the existing residential building to provide six bedrooms for a maximum of six individual occupants.

5.2 No additional bedrooms are proposed beyond the six shown on the submitted architectural drawings. Each bedroom is intended to accommodate one person only, and the planning application should be assessed on that defined basis.

5.3 The retention of six bedrooms is an important feature of the development because it establishes a finite level of occupation, rather than leaving open the possibility of additional persons occupying individual rooms on a shared or double-occupancy basis.

5.4 The revised arrangement comprises four bedrooms at ground-floor level and two bedrooms at first-floor level, together with the associated communal facilities indicated on the drawings.

5.5 The provision of approximately 28.64 square metres of designated communal accommodation is relevant to the assessment of the internal living environment. This comprises approximately 21.22 square metres at ground-floor level and 7.42 square metres at first-floor level.

5.6 Expressed across the maximum proposed occupancy of six people, the designated communal rooms provide approximately 4.77 square metres of shared living accommodation per person. This calculation is offered as a descriptive indicator of space allocation, rather than as a substitute for the Council's applicable room-size, layout or amenity requirements.

5.7 The usefulness of communal accommodation depends upon more than its numerical area. Its configuration, furniture arrangement, natural lighting, ventilation, kitchen installation, circulation space and capacity to support everyday activities must also be considered.

5.8 Consequently, the principal value of the revised scheme lies not simply in the cumulative area of communal accommodation but in the establishment of rooms with identifiable domestic functions, intended to be available to all occupants.

5.9 The proposed bedrooms are shown as individually allocated sleeping rooms, with the drawings indicating room areas generally around 8.50 square metres at ground-floor level and approximately 9.05 and 9.24 square metres for the two first-floor bedrooms.

5.10 These figures should be read with the dimensions and room configurations shown on the submitted drawings. The precise usable floor area of each room, after accounting for any relevant physical constraints, remains a matter to be verified through accurate measurement where necessary.

5.11 It is important to distinguish between the number of bedrooms and the number of occupants. The application expressly proposes single-person occupation of each bedroom, and any permission could appropriately be subject to a condition limiting the total residential occupancy to six persons.

5.12 Such a condition would provide a clear and enforceable planning parameter and assist in preventing subsequent occupation at a materially greater intensity without further planning consideration.

5.13 The proposal does not seek to increase the amount of external built development. The submitted scheme is based on the existing building envelope and the internal redistribution of accommodation.

5.14 In spatial design terms, the proposed development therefore represents a reorganisation of existing residential floorspace rather than an enlargement of the building.

5.15 The Council's adopted Policy 8 includes a criterion requiring an original property proposed for HMO conversion to have a floor area of at least 120 square metres. The existing drawing information reviewed to date indicates an area below that figure, and this constitutes a substantive policy issue requiring express assessment within the separate Planning Statement. The increased communal provision must not be conflated with compliance with the original-property floorspace criterion.

5.16 Nevertheless, the design assessment remains relevant because it establishes the actual character, configuration and functionality of the proposed accommodation. These considerations must be understood when evaluating the potential residential environment offered by the proposal, irrespective of the separate policy question relating to original dwelling size.

6.0 Internal Layout and Spatial Organisation

6.1 The proposed internal layout has been developed following consideration of the physical characteristics of the existing building and the particular requirements of shared residential occupation. The fundamental objective is to provide an integrated arrangement in which individual bedrooms, sanitary facilities, communal accommodation and circulation areas perform distinct but complementary functions.

6.2 The revised arrangement retains six bedrooms distributed across the ground and first floors. Four bedrooms are accommodated at ground-floor level and two at first-floor level. The retention of bedrooms across both floors reflects the existing internal configuration and allows the available space to be organised without introducing further building extensions.

6.3 The design places particular emphasis upon the relationship between private sleeping accommodation and spaces intended for communal use. In shared residential accommodation, this relationship is a significant determinant of the quality of the living environment, as residents must be capable of undertaking everyday domestic activities without unreasonable interference with the privacy or enjoyment of other occupants.

6.4 The provision of private bedrooms allows individual residents to maintain personal accommodation for sleeping, studying and quiet activities. The shared facilities provide an alternative environment for cooking, dining, relaxation and ordinary social interaction.

6.5 The proposed layout has therefore been designed to avoid an arrangement in which bedrooms effectively become the sole living accommodation available to individual occupants.

6.6 The proposed ground-floor kitchen, living and dining room is intended to form the principal communal centre of the property. Its location provides a shared facility within the lower level of the building and accommodates several complementary domestic functions within a single designated space.

6.7 The additional first-floor communal living room supplements the principal shared accommodation. Its inclusion is intended to provide an alternative communal setting, allowing residents to undertake different activities without necessarily occupying the principal kitchen and dining space simultaneously.

6.8 Such differentiation is particularly beneficial within shared accommodation because the domestic routines of individual residents may vary. The provision of an additional shared room offers greater flexibility than an arrangement dependent upon a single communal space.

6.9 The spatial distribution also recognises that communal accommodation should be reasonably accessible to residents accommodated at both ground and first-floor levels.

6.10 The proposed design does not rely upon the private bedrooms being treated as communal space. Each sleeping room retains its designated residential function, and the communal areas are separately identified on the drawings.

6.11 The internal configuration is intended to establish a clear, readily understandable arrangement. This assists residents in navigating the property, reduces uncertainty concerning the intended use of individual spaces and supports the practical management of shared facilities.

6.12 The design also avoids the introduction of additional storeys or substantial alterations to the structural form of the existing building. The proposed arrangement utilises the established floor levels and building envelope.

6.13 The effectiveness of the internal layout will ultimately depend upon the dimensions and arrangement of fixed installations, furniture, doors and circulation routes. Accordingly, the actual provision of kitchen facilities and communal furniture should remain consistent with the designated functions shown on the architectural drawings.

6.14 The design objective is not merely to provide nominal communal floor areas but to establish usable accommodation capable of supporting ordinary residential activities.

7.0 Ground-Floor Communal Kitchen, Living and Dining Accommodation

7.1 A central feature of the proposed development is the provision of a designated kitchen, living and dining room measuring approximately 21.22 square metres at ground-floor level.

7.2 This room is intended to function as the principal shared domestic space for all six residents and represents a significant component of the proposed accommodation arrangement.

7.3 The principal communal room has been allocated sufficient functional importance within the design to operate as more than a kitchen alone. It is expressly intended to incorporate food preparation, dining and living activities within an identifiable shared environment.

7.4 The combination of these functions reflects the manner in which shared residential accommodation is ordinarily used. Kitchen facilities are not simply places for food storage and cooking; they can also support everyday household interaction and provide opportunities for residents to spend time together.

7.5 The designated room provides the principal opportunity for residents to undertake communal domestic activities away from the individual sleeping rooms.

7.6 The proposed floor area allows the room to be assessed in terms of its ability to accommodate suitable kitchen fittings, appropriate dining furniture and living accommodation while maintaining usable circulation space.

7.7 The exact capacity of the room to support simultaneous use by all six occupants must be demonstrated by the final furniture and kitchen arrangement. The design intention is that all residents should be able to access and use the communal facilities on an equitable basis.

7.8 Particular importance is attached to the retention of adequate circulation around kitchen units and dining furniture. The installation of fixed fittings or movable furniture should not obstruct access routes, door openings or the practical use of the room.

7.9 The kitchen installation should provide facilities proportionate to the maximum intended occupancy, including suitable food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment, refrigeration, storage, washing facilities and means of ventilation.

7.10 The detailed specification and arrangement of such facilities are matters for the relevant housing and building regulatory requirements. Their inclusion in the completed accommodation should support the room's identified kitchen, dining and living functions.

7.11 The availability of this communal facility is particularly relevant in circumstances where each bedroom is intended for single occupation. The communal room should provide a shared domestic environment accessible to all six residents rather than functioning as an exclusive facility associated with any individual letting room.

7.12 The communal room should remain available for its designated purpose throughout the occupation of the property and should not subsequently be partitioned, converted into sleeping accommodation or otherwise used in a manner that would undermine the assessed communal provision.

7.13 A planning condition retaining the principal room as communal kitchen, living and dining accommodation could provide additional certainty regarding the continuing availability of the facility.

7.14 The design therefore seeks to establish a permanent and meaningful communal component within the residential layout.

8.0 First-Floor Communal Living Accommodation

8.1 In addition to the principal communal accommodation at ground-floor level, the proposed drawings identify a separate communal living room measuring approximately 7.42 square metres at first-floor level.

8.2 This room forms part of the overall strategy for improving the distribution and availability of shared facilities within the property.

8.3 The room is intended to supplement, rather than replace, the principal ground-floor kitchen, living and dining space. Its function is to provide an alternative shared setting for quiet relaxation, informal conversation or other compatible domestic activities.

8.4 The provision of a separate communal room recognises that shared residential occupation frequently involves residents undertaking different activities at the same time.

8.5 For example, the principal kitchen and dining room may be occupied by residents preparing meals, while another resident may wish to use an alternative room for relaxation or quiet social activity.

8.6 The first-floor communal accommodation therefore contributes to the flexibility of the proposed layout by providing additional options for residents.

8.7 The location of the room at first-floor level is also relevant. It ensures that communal accommodation is not concentrated exclusively on the ground floor and provides an additional shared facility in closer proximity to the two first-floor bedrooms.

8.8 The relatively modest dimensions of this room must be acknowledged. It should not be represented as a second principal communal room capable of independently accommodating all six residents for every communal activity.

8.9 Its value is instead complementary. When considered alongside the larger ground-floor facility, it contributes to the overall choice and distribution of shared accommodation.

8.10 The room should be furnished in a manner appropriate to its dimensions and should remain available to all residents rather than being allocated to any particular bedroom.

8.11 The additional room also assists in distinguishing the proposal from an arrangement in which the entire first floor is devoted solely to individual sleeping accommodation.

8.12 The design thus seeks to establish a more balanced residential environment, incorporating opportunities for both individual privacy and communal use.

9.0 Bedroom Accommodation and Residential Privacy

9.1 The proposed development provides six bedrooms, each intended for occupation by one individual resident.
9.2 The design approach has been informed by the need to provide identifiable and functional sleeping accommodation together with associated sanitary facilities.

9.3 Individual bedrooms form the private component of the shared residential accommodation. Their principal purpose is to provide residents with a secure and personal environment for sleeping, rest and other activities appropriately undertaken in private.

9.4 The proposed single-occupancy arrangement is an essential part of the residential design. The use of any bedroom by two or more persons would alter the relationship between private accommodation, communal provision and the overall intensity of occupation.

9.5 Accordingly, the proposals are expressly based upon a maximum of one person per bedroom and six persons within the property as a whole.

9.6 The ground-floor bedrooms are shown with areas generally around 8.50 square metres, while the two first-floor bedrooms are identified as approximately 9.05 and 9.24 square metres.

9.7 The adequacy of these rooms must be determined having regard to their actual usable areas, configuration and the applicable planning and HMO accommodation standards.

9.8 The Housing Act 2004 licensing framework establishes a national minimum sleeping-room area of 6.51 square metres for one person aged over ten years, although local authorities may require higher standards. Compliance with the national licensing minimum does not, in itself, establish compliance with separate planning requirements.

9.9 The proposed bedrooms should therefore be assessed against the relevant local accommodation guidance, including any applicable minimum sizes and requirements concerning shape, natural lighting, ventilation and usability.

9.10 Where bedrooms have relatively compact dimensions, the efficient placement of furniture is particularly important. Each bedroom should be capable of accommodating essential sleeping and personal storage furniture without unreasonable obstruction of movement or access.

9.11 The retention of en-suite sanitary facilities within the individual bedrooms is an important design feature. It reduces the need for residents to move between bedrooms and communal bathrooms during normal personal hygiene routines.

9.12 This arrangement contributes to personal privacy and provides a clear separation between sanitary accommodation associated with individual bedrooms and the communal domestic spaces used by the wider household.

9.13 The provision of individual en-suites should not, however, diminish the functionality of the bedroom itself. The usable area and arrangement of each sleeping room must remain sufficient for its intended purpose.

9.14 The design is intended to achieve an appropriate relationship between compact private accommodation and more substantial shared facilities. The availability of communal living rooms is particularly relevant because it provides residents with usable accommodation beyond their individual bedrooms.

9.15 The overall residential arrangement is therefore based upon complementary private and communal facilities rather than reliance upon bedrooms as self-contained living units.

10.0 Scale, Height and Massing

10.1 The proposed development is confined to the internal reorganisation of the existing residential property, without the introduction of additional external building mass.

10.2 The established scale, overall height and principal massing of the building are therefore retained.
10.3 This is a significant consideration in assessing the design response to the existing residential setting. The proposal does not seek to increase the visual prominence of the property or alter the fundamental relationship between its built form and the surrounding residential development.

10.4 No additional external storey is proposed, and the application does not depend upon a rear, side or roof extension to accommodate the proposed six-bedroom arrangement.

10.5 The absence of additional built mass avoids creating new physical effects associated with enlarged residential buildings, such as increased enclosure, new overshadowing or the introduction of additional bulk close to neighbouring boundaries.

10.6 The development consequently retains the physical characteristics of an existing dwelling within its established residential surroundings.

10.7 The internal change in accommodation arrangement must still be considered separately in relation to its operational effects. Nevertheless, in architectural terms, the proposed design does not introduce a new scale or form of building development.

11.0 Appearance, Architectural Character and Streetscape

11.1 The proposed development retains the external architectural character of the existing property.
11.2 The submitted scheme is not based upon the creation of a new architectural identity or the substantial redesign of the building's principal elevations.

11.3 The architectural approach is deliberately restrained, recognising that the existing residential appearance of the property contributes to its relationship with the wider street scene.

11.4 The absence of substantial external alterations allows the established composition of the building to remain the dominant visual element.

11.5 This approach is particularly appropriate for an application concerned principally with the internal organisation and use of an existing residential building.

11.6 The design avoids unnecessary external interventions that could otherwise introduce visual inconsistency or detract from the character of the surrounding residential environment.

11.7 The continued domestic appearance of the premises is also relevant to its integration within the residential street. The proposal does not require an overtly institutional building form or large-scale external additions.

11.8 Maintaining the external residential character is not presented as sufficient, by itself, to justify the proposed HMO use. It is, however, a positive aspect of the design because the physical appearance of the building can remain consistent with its residential surroundings.

11.9 The proposal therefore adopts an approach of architectural continuity, with the principal changes concentrated upon the functional improvement of the internal accommodation.

12.0 Residential Amenity for Future Occupants

12.1 The quality of residential accommodation provided for future occupants is a central consideration in the design of the proposed development.

12.2 In assessing shared residential accommodation, consideration must be given to the amount and usability of private space, the availability of communal facilities, the relationship between different domestic functions and the extent to which the internal arrangement supports ordinary daily living.

12.3 The proposed development has been organised around the retention of six individual bedrooms, each intended for a single resident, supported by designated communal accommodation.

12.4 The principal communal kitchen, living and dining room provides a space for activities that would otherwise have to be undertaken within individual bedrooms or within more limited shared facilities.

12.5 The supplementary first-floor living room provides further flexibility, allowing different communal activities to take place within the property without requiring every resident to use the same room.

12.6 This distribution of communal space is intended to improve the practical residential environment and support a more balanced pattern of occupation.

12.7 The provision of individual en-suite facilities further contributes to the accommodation arrangement by providing convenient and private sanitary accommodation.

12.8 The design seeks to minimise functional conflicts between sleeping, cooking, dining, personal hygiene and recreational activities.

12.9 Appropriate levels of natural light and ventilation are also important to residential amenity. The suitability of the existing windows and ventilation arrangements should be assessed in conjunction with the final room layout and the requirements applicable to the proposed use.

12.10 The provision of a communal room does not automatically establish satisfactory residential amenity merely because an area has been identified on a plan. The room must be capable of practical use, with suitable furniture, adequate circulation and the necessary domestic facilities.

12.11 For this reason, the design intention is that the ground-floor communal room should remain capable of accommodating the principal shared kitchen, dining and living functions, and that the first-floor communal room should provide a genuine supplementary living facility.

12.12 Considered collectively, the proposed internal changes are intended to establish a more coherent residential arrangement than one dependent upon individual bedrooms and limited shared cooking facilities.

13.0 Neighbouring Residential Amenity

13.1 The effect of the proposed development upon neighbouring residential occupiers is an important consideration, particularly where an established residential property is proposed to accommodate separate households.

13.2 The design seeks to minimise potential effects upon neighbouring properties through the retention of the existing building envelope and the establishment of a clearly defined maximum occupancy.

13.3 As no additional external building mass is proposed, the development does not introduce new physical impacts arising from increased building height, enlarged extensions or substantial changes to the built relationship with neighbouring properties.

13.4 The principal matters requiring consideration therefore relate to the operation of the proposed residential use, including domestic activity, movements to and from the premises and the management of shared facilities.

13.5 The maximum occupation of six individual residents provides a defined basis for the assessment of these effects.

13.6 The availability of designated communal living accommodation is intended to support an orderly internal residential environment, where routine domestic activities can take place within spaces intended for those purposes.

13.7 Appropriate management is particularly important in limiting unreasonable disturbance. The operation of the property should be supported by arrangements relating to maintenance, refuse, conduct within communal spaces and the resolution of any reported nuisance.

13.8 The design does not proceed on the assumption that an HMO of six residents will necessarily have precisely the same operational characteristics as a conventional single-family dwelling. Different household arrangements may generate different patterns of movement and domestic activity.

13.9 Nevertheless, the number of occupants, the absence of additional bedrooms and the provision of appropriate communal facilities are all relevant to the assessment of whether the proposed use can operate without unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

13.10 The detailed planning assessment of potential noise and disturbance is addressed in the accompanying Planning Statement. This Design and Access Statement identifies the physical and functional characteristics intended to support a manageable residential use.

14.0 Access to the Property

14.1 The proposed development is intended to retain the existing means of access to the residential building, as identified on the submitted site and architectural drawings.

14.2 The application does not seek to establish an additional independent residential building or a substantially different external access arrangement.

14.3 The principal access arrangements should continue to provide a clear and practical route between the property and the surrounding pedestrian environment.

14.4 Internally, the accommodation is distributed across the ground and first floors, with shared access and circulation serving the bedrooms and communal facilities.

14.5 The layout is intended to provide all residents with access to the communal facilities without requiring movement through another resident's private bedroom.

14.6 The proposed ground-floor communal room provides a shared facility at the lower residential level, while the first-floor room provides supplementary accommodation accessible to upper-floor residents and other occupants through the common internal circulation.

14.7 The retention of established internal circulation arrangements should be accompanied by appropriate consideration of unobstructed movement, door operation, access to sanitary facilities and emergency escape.
14.8 Given that the proposal involves an existing building, opportunities to introduce comprehensive accessibility alterations may be influenced by the building's established structure and dimensions.

14.9 Nevertheless, the design seeks to make effective use of the existing accommodation without unnecessarily complicating routes to essential shared facilities.

14.10 No claim is made that the proposed building provides full step-free accessibility throughout both floors. Any such provision would need to be established from the detailed drawings and physical site conditions.

14.11 The access arrangements must also remain compatible with applicable building regulations, fire safety requirements and any relevant HMO licensing obligations.

15.0 Inclusive Design

15.1 Inclusive design requires consideration of how residential accommodation can be understood, accessed and used by individuals with differing needs and abilities.

15.2 The application concerns adaptation of an existing residential property rather than construction of a purpose-designed accessible building. The opportunities for substantial structural reconfiguration are therefore more constrained than would be the case with a new-build development.

15.3 Within these constraints, the design seeks to establish clearly identifiable bedroom accommodation, straightforward circulation and shared facilities available to the proposed household.

15.4 The provision of communal accommodation at ground-floor level is a positive aspect of the spatial organisation because it places the principal kitchen, dining and living functions on the lower floor.
15.5 However, the existence of a ground-floor communal room does not, in itself, establish that the accommodation is suitable for all categories of mobility impairment.

15.6 The precise accessibility characteristics of the entrance, internal doors, circulation routes and sanitary facilities should be considered against the physical limitations of the existing building and any applicable regulatory requirements.

15.7 The design objective is to avoid unnecessary barriers to movement and ensure that the accommodation operates in a logical, understandable and practical manner for its intended residents.

16.0 Fire Safety and Means of Escape

16.1 Fire safety is a fundamental consideration in the design and occupation of shared residential accommodation.
16.2 The proposed development involves six bedrooms and shared domestic facilities distributed across the principal floors of the existing building. Appropriate arrangements for detection, warning, evacuation, fire separation and means of escape must therefore be established.

16.3 The proposed internal layout should be assessed in conjunction with an appropriate fire risk assessment and the applicable Building Regulations and HMO requirements.

16.4 Particular consideration should be given to the relationship between the communal kitchen and living accommodation, individual bedroom doors, internal circulation routes and the principal exit from the premises.
16.5 The design must ensure that the installation of communal furniture, kitchen equipment or storage does not obstruct essential escape routes.

16.6 Appropriate fire-resisting construction, suitable doors, alarm systems and other fire safety measures should be determined by the relevant competent professionals having regard to the final layout and intended occupation.
16.7 The proposed use should not commence or continue in a configuration that fails to provide an appropriate level of fire safety for its residents.

16.8 The planning assessment of the proposed internal arrangement should be distinguished from the separate technical approval or licensing processes that may be required to establish compliance with applicable fire safety legislation.

16.9 The design intention is to provide accommodation capable of being operated safely, subject to the detailed verification and implementation of the necessary fire safety measures.

17.0 Refuse Storage and Waste Management

17.1 Appropriate refuse storage and collection arrangements are necessary to ensure that the proposed shared residential accommodation operates without unacceptable effects upon the surrounding residential environment.

17.2 A six-person HMO requires waste management arrangements proportionate to the intended number of occupants and the applicable Council collection requirements.

17.3 Refuse and recycling facilities should be provided within an appropriate area of the application site, subject to the existing external layout and access arrangements.

17.4 The storage arrangements should be capable of accommodating the anticipated domestic waste generated by the residents without requiring permanent storage of bins on the public highway.

17.5 Consideration should also be given to the accessibility of the storage area, the practical movement of containers to the collection point and the need to avoid obstructing entrances or pedestrian routes.

17.6 The design objective is to maintain the residential appearance of the premises and avoid unnecessary visual or environmental impacts associated with poorly positioned refuse containers.

17.7 Suitable waste management arrangements should be maintained through the ongoing operation of the property, with clear responsibilities for the presentation and return of refuse containers.

17.8 Where the Council requires further information, a specific refuse management arrangement can be agreed to ensure that the operation of the property meets relevant local standards. The final provision should be supported by the site plan and sufficient details of storage capacity and collection access.

18.0 Transport, Parking and Movement

18.1 The proposed development retains the existing residential building and does not involve additional floor area or an increased number of bedrooms beyond the proposed six-bedroom arrangement.

18.2 The maximum proposed occupancy of six residents provides a defined basis for considering pedestrian movements, vehicle activity and potential parking demand.

18.3 The transport implications of an HMO must be considered in the context of the site's accessibility, available parking provision, surrounding highway conditions and likely residential travel patterns.

18.4 The design does not rely upon the construction of additional residential units or the subdivision of the building into six self-contained apartments.

18.5 The proposed accommodation is instead organised as a shared household arrangement with individual bedrooms and communal domestic facilities.

18.6 The distinction between a shared HMO and independent self-contained apartments is relevant because the building is intended to function with common facilities and a single overall residential management arrangement.

18.7 Nevertheless, it would not be appropriate to assume that the proposed six residents will generate no parking demand merely because they occupy shared accommodation.

18.8 The Council should assess the proposed use against the actual parking arrangements, local highway circumstances and relevant adopted standards.

18.9 The applicant's defined occupation limit allows the potential intensity of the development to be understood and considered as part of that assessment.

18.10 Any proposed cycle storage should be positioned to provide convenient access for residents without obstructing entrances, circulation or refuse collection arrangements.

18.11 The design and access implications of parking and transport should therefore be considered in conjunction with the accompanying site plan and the wider evidence presented within the Planning Statement.

19.0 Sustainability and Efficient Use of Existing Buildings

19.1 The development adopts a building-reuse approach in which the existing structure and principal external building envelope are retained.

19.2 The adaptation of existing buildings can represent a resource-efficient approach to development by reducing the need for additional construction materials and avoiding unnecessary demolition or structural expansion.
19.3 The proposed internal alterations are intended to secure a more functional residential arrangement from the floorspace already available within the premises.

19.4 This approach is consistent with the broader design principle of making effective use of established buildings before considering additional physical development.

19.5 By retaining the principal building form, the design avoids additional material consumption associated with constructing substantial extensions.

19.6 The absence of new external building mass also limits the physical changes introduced to the surrounding residential environment.

19.7 Opportunities to improve the environmental performance of the building through appropriate heating, lighting, ventilation, insulation and efficient domestic appliances should be considered as part of the implementation of the internal alterations.

19.8 The proposed communal arrangements may also facilitate the use of shared domestic facilities rather than requiring separate kitchens and appliances within each individual bedroom.

19.9 No quantified carbon reduction or energy efficiency improvement is claimed without supporting technical calculations or specifications.
19.10 The sustainability benefit identified in this Statement is therefore principally associated with retaining and making more effective use of the existing building, rather than the achievement of any unverified environmental performance standard.

20.0 Design Response to the Council's Identified Concerns

20.1 The application has been prepared against the background of the Council's enforcement investigation and concerns regarding the suitability of the existing accommodation for the proposed HMO use.

20.2 The purpose of the revised design is to establish a clear and comprehensive internal arrangement that can be properly examined by the Local Planning Authority.

20.3 The design response is centred upon the retention of six bedrooms while allocating identifiable accommodation for shared cooking, dining and living activities.

20.4 The principal ground-floor communal room of approximately 21.22 square metres, supplemented by a first-floor living room of approximately 7.42 square metres, represents the central spatial feature of the revised arrangement.

20.5 This provision is intended to address the quality and availability of shared living accommodation, rather than to establish an additional basis for increasing the number of occupants.

20.6 The proposal also retains individual en-suite facilities and an internal configuration intended to establish a clear relationship between private bedrooms and communal accommodation.

20.7 Importantly, the design does not seek to overcome identified constraints through additional external building works, greater residential density or the provision of further letting rooms.

20.8 The revised accommodation should therefore be considered as a defined proposal, with its own identifiable layout, maximum occupancy and designated communal facilities.

20.9 The applicant recognises that the provision of improved internal accommodation does not automatically resolve every policy matter relevant to HMO development.

20.10 In particular, Havering Local Plan Policy 8 establishes criteria concerning original property size, HMO concentration, neighbouring amenity, parking, refuse storage, communal accommodation and compliance with relevant HMO guidance. These requirements must be assessed individually and then considered within the overall planning balance.

20.11 The original dwelling floorspace criterion requires particular attention because the measurements currently available suggest that the building falls below the policy threshold of 120 square metres.

20.12 This Statement does not seek to treat the combined communal space, the number of bedrooms or the availability of individual en-suites as a means of satisfying that separate original-property size requirement.

20.13 Rather, the Design and Access Statement establishes that the scheme has been considered and organised around a specific residential layout, with physical improvements directed towards accommodating the proposed six residents as effectively as reasonably possible within the existing building.

20.14 The question of whether the identified design benefits and other material considerations justify granting planning permission notwithstanding any conflict with an individual policy criterion is addressed within the accompanying Planning Statement.

20.15 The Council is consequently invited to assess the design on its actual merits, including the defined occupation level, the retention of the existing built form, the provision of designated shared accommodation and the capacity of the internal layout to support a functional residential environment.

21.0 Conclusion

21.1 This Design and Access Statement has explained the principles informing the proposed retention and internal reconfiguration of the residential property at 59 Wolseley Road, Romford, RM7 0BS, to provide accommodation for six individual HMO residents.

21.2 The proposed development has been designed around the retention and effective use of the existing building, without introducing additional bedrooms, substantial external alterations or an increase in the existing building's scale and massing.

21.3 The principal design intervention is the reallocation and organisation of internal space to provide six private sleeping rooms, associated en-suite facilities and approximately 28.64 square metres of designated communal accommodation.
21.4 The provision of a principal ground-floor kitchen, living and dining room measuring approximately 21.22 square metres is intended to establish a meaningful domestic space for shared everyday activities.

21.5 The additional first-floor communal living room, measuring approximately 7.42 square metres, supplements this provision and introduces greater flexibility in the distribution and use of shared accommodation.

21.6 The proposed layout consequently seeks to achieve a clearer distinction between private sleeping areas and communal facilities, providing residents with greater opportunities to undertake domestic activities outside their individual bedrooms.

21.7 The retention of one-person occupation for each of the six bedrooms is an integral part of the design strategy and provides a defined maximum occupancy for the purposes of assessing accommodation quality, communal provision and potential operational effects.

21.8 In architectural terms, the proposal preserves the established external character of the property and avoids introducing new built mass or substantial visual changes to the surrounding residential environment.

21.9 The design also seeks to provide a coherent internal circulation arrangement, access to communal facilities and a framework within which appropriate fire safety, waste management and operational arrangements can be implemented.

21.10 The applicant recognises that the acceptability of the proposed HMO use must be determined by reference to the development plan and all relevant material considerations, and that improvements to internal accommodation do not automatically establish compliance with every applicable planning policy.

21.11 Nevertheless, the revised design provides an identifiable and considered scheme capable of detailed assessment, rather than an undefined or potentially expanding arrangement of individual residential letting rooms.

21.12 The development represents a proportionate approach to the adaptation of an existing residential building, focusing upon improved shared facilities, the functional organisation of the available accommodation and the retention of the property's established architectural character.

21.13 Subject to verification of the relevant technical and operational requirements, the proposed internal arrangement is intended to support a functional and appropriately managed form of six-person shared residential accommodation.

21.14 The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully invited to recognise the design considerations underpinning the proposal and to assess the proposed accommodation on the basis of the revised architectural drawings, its defined occupation level and the supporting planning evidence submitted with the application.

21.15 For the reasons explained within this Statement, the proposed design provides a clear and coherent basis for the consideration of the planning application and its associated internal accommodation arrangements.

Regards,

Ayaz Uddin

Director & Lead Planning Consultant

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Architectural Practice Credentials
ARB Registered Architect | RIBA Chartered Member