

DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Property: 175A Commercial Street (Unit 3, Westgate Building), Newport, NP20 1JN

Application Type: Full Planning Application

Proposal: Increase of the approved HMO from six to seven bedrooms through use of the approved study room as a seventh single-occupancy bedroom

Existing Planning Permission: 25/0706 (following 22/0794)

Full Planning Application



175A Commercial Street, Newport

1. Introduction

This Design, Access and Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Tomilmeriad Limited in support of a full planning application relating to 175A Commercial Street, Newport.

The property benefits from planning permission for use as a six-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), most recently confirmed under planning permission 25/0706.

The purpose of this application is to seek permission for the room presently identified on the approved plan as a study room to be used as a seventh single-occupancy bedroom, thereby increasing the approved accommodation from six to seven bedrooms.

The proposed seventh bedroom has an approximate usable floor area of 7.0 m² and is intended for occupation by one person only.

No other substantive physical changes to the approved development are proposed. In particular, the proposal does not involve:

- any extension to the building;
- any increase in the external footprint;
- any change to the principal elevation;
- any additional window or door openings;
- any alteration to the established access arrangements; or
- any change to the underlying HMO use of the property.

The proposal therefore represents a limited internal change relative to the approved six-bedroom HMO, with the principal planning consideration being the modest increase in maximum bedroom from six to seven persons.



Aerial view of the site and surrounding city-centre context.



Entrance to the building marked with red lines.

2. Site and Existing Development

175A Commercial Street occupies part of the historic Westgate Building in Newport city centre. The property is situated in a highly accessible location, close to shops, employment, services and public transport.

Planning permission has already established the acceptability of HMO use at this location. The approved arrangement provides six bedrooms together with communal kitchen, living/dining, sanitary, circulation and ancillary accommodation.

The approved floor plan also identifies a separate study room. This application seeks to make more efficient residential use of that existing room by using it as a seventh single-occupancy bedroom. The physical envelope of the property remains unchanged.

3. Proposed Development

The proposed change is limited to the internal designation and occupation of the existing study room:

Approved arrangement: Study Room

Proposed arrangement: Bedroom 7 - Single Occupancy

The proposed bedroom provides approximately 7.0 m² of usable floor area. No subdivision, extension or enlargement of the room is required to facilitate the proposed use.

The proposal therefore makes efficient use of existing floorspace within the approved development rather than creating additional building volume or extending the property.

4. Principle of Development and Housing Need

The principle of residential HMO use has already been established through the existing planning permissions for the property.

The proposal does not introduce a new land use. Instead, it represents a modest intensification of the approved HMO through the provision of one additional single-occupancy bedroom within the existing building envelope.

The proposal will provide one additional bedspace of rented accommodation within Newport city centre and make more efficient use of an existing building. It contributes, albeit at a modest scale, towards meeting the continuing need for a range of housing options within Newport.

The location is particularly sustainable because residents have convenient access to employment, retail, services and public transport. Importantly, the additional accommodation is achieved without extension, additional land take or alteration to the principal elevation.

5. Bedroom Size and Residential Amenity

The proposed Bedroom 7 has an approximate usable floor area of 7.0 m² and is expressly intended for single-person occupation only.

This exceeds Newport City Council's published minimum bedroom area of 6.51 m² for a single occupant, subject to the Council's normal method of measuring usable floor area. The room can accommodate the normal furniture required for a single bedroom while maintaining appropriate circulation.

The proposed designation is therefore considered appropriate for one resident and will be reflected accordingly in the HMO licensing arrangements.

The proposal does not involve the loss of the principal communal living facilities. Residents will continue to have access to the approved communal kitchen and living/dining accommodation together with the sanitary facilities serving the development.

6. Effect of the Additional Occupant

The principal planning consideration arising from the proposal is the increase in maximum occupancy from six to seven persons. The applicant has therefore considered whether the additional resident would create unacceptable pressure upon:

- communal amenity space;
- kitchen facilities;
- bathroom and sanitary provision;
- fire safety and means of escape;
- ventilation;
- noise and acoustic amenity;
- refuse and recycling arrangements;
- access and movement; and
- the historic character of the building.

These matters are addressed below.

6.1 Communal Amenity

The approved development incorporates a 21 m² communal kitchen and a 20 m² communal living/dining room. These facilities are retained without reduction and remain available to all occupants.

The seventh bedroom is created from a secondary study room rather than from the principal communal living accommodation. The modest increase of one resident is therefore not considered to result in an unacceptable reduction in the quality or functionality of the communal accommodation.

6.2 Kitchen and Sanitary Facilities

The approved kitchen and sanitary facilities are retained. The increase is limited to one additional person, and no further subdivision of the principal communal facilities is proposed.

The property will additionally be subject to the separate HMO licensing regime, through which Newport City Council can confirm that the kitchen, sanitary and management arrangements are suitable for the authorised number of occupants. The applicant will ensure that the property satisfies the applicable HMO licensing requirements for a maximum occupation of seven persons prior to occupation at that level.

6.3 Ventilation and Internal Environment

Bedroom 7 will be treated as a habitable room and provided with appropriate ventilation in accordance with the applicable Building Regulations and the ventilation strategy for the development.

The additional bedroom does not require any alteration to the principal elevation. The established approach to ventilation, developed having regard to the heritage constraints of the building, will continue to be applied so that adequate internal environmental conditions can be provided without unnecessary intervention to significant historic fabric.

6.4 Noise and Acoustic Amenity

The approved development is subject to an established acoustic strategy designed to safeguard the living conditions of HMO occupants. Planning permission 25/0706 also requires the development to meet specified internal noise standards and to install the approved sound-insulation scheme before first use.

Bedroom 7 will receive the same appropriate consideration in respect of internal and external noise as the other habitable rooms. Existing and proposed acoustic measures within the development include enhanced acoustic separation between relevant spaces and appropriate treatment of the building envelope.

The increase of one resident is modest and is not expected to materially alter the overall noise characteristics of the approved HMO. HMO management requirements provide a further mechanism for ensuring that occupation of the property does not result in unacceptable impacts upon residential amenity.

6.5 Waste and Recycling

The approved scheme incorporates arrangements for general waste and recycling storage. The addition of a single resident would result in only a limited increase in household waste generation.

Existing waste-management arrangements will be retained and, where necessary, management capacity will be adjusted to accommodate the seventh resident. Waste will continue to be appropriately segregated and presented for collection in accordance with Newport City Council requirements.

The additional occupancy therefore does not require any new permanent external refuse structure or alteration affecting the street scene.

6.6 Access and Sustainable Location

There is no alteration to pedestrian access into or through the building. The property occupies a highly accessible city-centre location where residents can conveniently access shops, employment, services and public transport.

The increase of one resident is therefore unlikely to result in a material change in transport or highway impacts compared with the approved six-person HMO. No alteration to the existing access arrangements is required.

7. Heritage and Design

The property forms part of a building of recognised architectural and historic interest and is treated as a curtilage-listed asset by association with the adjoining listed buildings. It also lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area.

The design approach throughout the development has sought to minimise unnecessary intervention to historic fabric. The present proposal is particularly limited in heritage terms because the change from study room to bedroom is principally a change in the designation and occupation of an existing internal room.

There will be:

- no extension;
- no alteration to the building footprint;
- no new external openings;
- no alteration to the principal elevation;
- no material change to the appearance of the building; and
- no additional visual impact upon the surrounding historic environment.

The proposal therefore represents an efficient use of the existing building while maintaining the heritage-sensitive approach established through the approved development and preserving the character and appearance of the Town Centre Conservation Area.

8. Planning Policy Considerations

The proposal should be considered against the Newport Local Development Plan 2011-2026 and other relevant national and local planning guidance. Particular consideration is given to:

Policy H8 - Self Contained Accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation

The principle of HMO use has already been established. The proposal retains that use and provides one additional single-person bedroom within the existing building.

Policy GP2 - General Amenity

The additional occupancy can be accommodated without unacceptable effects upon the amenity of existing or future occupants. Appropriate bedroom space, communal facilities, sanitary provision, ventilation, acoustic treatment and waste arrangements will continue to be provided.

Policy GP6 - Quality of Design

The proposal represents an efficient reuse of existing internal floorspace without requiring additional extensions or visually intrusive external works.

Policy GP7 - Environmental Protection and Public Health

Noise, ventilation, waste and general residential conditions continue to be addressed through the established design strategy together with Building Regulations and HMO licensing controls.

Policy SP9 - Conservation of the Natural, Historic and Built Environment

No external alterations arise from the use of the study as Bedroom 7. The proposal therefore preserves the architectural character and appearance of the building and the surrounding historic environment.

9. Planning History and Scope of Application

Planning permission 22/0794 established the change of use of the first floor to a six-bedroom HMO. Planning permission 25/0706 subsequently varied the approved plans and dealt with a number of conditions associated with that development.

Those permissions provide the approved planning baseline for the site and establish the acceptability of HMO use at the property.

This full planning application seeks permission for a single, clearly defined change to that approved baseline: use of the room shown as a study on the approved floor plan as Bedroom 7 for single occupancy.

The submitted existing floor plan identifies the approved six-bedroom arrangement and the submitted proposed floor plan identifies the proposed seven-bedroom arrangement. The application does not propose any enlargement of the building, new external openings, changes to access or other substantive alterations to the approved development.

The proposed amendment should therefore be considered as a focused variation to the approved plans rather than a reconsideration of the wider development.

10. Summary of Constraints and Mitigation

Planning consideration	Potential effect of seventh occupier	Proposed mitigation / planning response
Bedroom size & residential amenity	The proposed Bedroom 7 must provide an acceptable standard of private accommodation for a single occupier.	Bedroom 7 provides approximately 7.0 m ² of usable floor area and is intended for single occupancy only. This exceeds the relevant 6.51 m ² minimum bedroom standard, subject to final measurement in accordance with the Council's HMO licensing methodology.
Communal amenity & intensity of use	Increasing occupancy from six to seven could place additional demand on the communal kitchen and living/dining facilities and increase the overall intensity of occupation.	The approved 21 m ² kitchen and 20 m ² living/dining room are retained without reduction. Bedroom 7 is formed from the existing study within the approved internal envelope, so no principal communal amenity space is lost. The increase is limited to one additional single occupier.
Sanitary facilities	A seventh occupier increases demand on bathroom/WC facilities.	Existing sanitary provision is retained, including ensuite facilities serving relevant bedrooms and shared facilities available to the remaining occupiers. Final occupancy and sanitary provision will remain subject to the Council's HMO licensing requirements.
Noise & neighbouring amenity	One additional resident could marginally increase internal activity and potential noise transmission.	The approved acoustic strategy under 25/0706 will be retained and Bedroom 7 will be incorporated into the acoustic treatment strategy as applicable. The development will continue to meet the internal noise and sound-insulation requirements established by the approved scheme. No new external amenity area or external source of activity is introduced.
Waste & recycling	Seven occupants could generate a modest increase in domestic refuse and recycling.	The established refuse and recycling storage arrangements will be retained and managed for the increased occupancy. Sufficient container capacity will be maintained for the number of residents as part of the HMO management arrangements.
Highways & parking	The seventh occupier could result in a marginal increase in trips or parking demand.	The proposal introduces only one additional occupier within an approved city-centre HMO and involves no enlargement of the building. The site is highly accessible to shops, services, employment and public transport, and the modest increase in occupancy is not expected to result in a material highway or parking impact.
Heritage / curtilage-listed asset	Use of the study as a bedroom must avoid harm to historic fabric or the special architectural and historic interest associated with the building.	The proposal is contained wholly within the existing building envelope and requires no extension, new opening or external alteration. No intervention to the significant heritage features identified through the approved development is proposed. Any separate works affecting listed fabric would remain subject to the appropriate consent regime.

Planning consideration	Potential effect of seventh occupier	Proposed mitigation / planning response
Design & character	Increasing the approved HMO from six to seven occupants represents a modest increase in the intensity of use.	The physical change is limited to use of the existing study as a single bedroom. There is no increase in footprint, massing or height and no external alteration. The established HMO use and overall character of the development remain unchanged.
HMO concentration / character of locality	An additional bedroom must be considered against Policy H8, including the potential for harmful HMO concentration or changes to neighbourhood character.	The proposal does not create an additional HMO property; the site is already approved for HMO use. The change from six to seven occupiers therefore does not increase the number of HMO properties in the locality, and any increase in intensity is limited to one additional resident.
Fire safety & licensing	Seven-person occupancy may affect the fire-safety and licensing requirements applicable to the premises.	The property will remain subject to Building Regulations, fire-safety requirements and Newport's HMO licensing regime. Any additional measures required as a consequence of seven-person occupation will be addressed through the relevant regulatory process before occupation at that level.

11. Conclusion

This full planning application seeks permission for a limited and proportionate increase in the approved HMO accommodation at 175A Commercial Street from six to seven bedrooms.

The proposal would allow the existing approved study room to be used as a single-occupancy seventh bedroom of approximately 7.0 m², increasing the maximum occupation of the property from six to seven persons.

The proposal makes efficient use of existing floorspace and provides an additional rented bedspace within Newport city centre without extending the building or materially altering its appearance.

Importantly:

- the principle of HMO use at the property is already established by planning permission;
- the proposed room exceeds the published minimum floor area for a single-person bedroom.
- the approved 21 m² kitchen and 20 m² living/dining room are retained;
- the increase is limited to one additional occupant;
- the approved acoustic and ventilation strategies will continue to protect residential amenity;
- waste arrangements can accommodate the modest increase in occupancy;
- existing access arrangements remain unchanged;
- the proposal does not create an additional HMO property in the locality; and
- no adverse impact upon the historic character or external appearance of the building arises.

The proposal therefore represents a sustainable and efficient use of the existing property while contributing an additional bedspace towards Newport's housing accommodation needs.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Newport City Council grants planning permission for the use of the approved study room as a seventh single-occupancy bedroom, resulting in a seven-bedroom HMO, in accordance with the submitted existing and proposed floor plans.