

Design & Access Statement

2A Christian Fields Avenue
Gravesend
DA12 5NF

prepared by:

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This desktop study has been prepared by **Hmo designers** and is subject to planning, building regulation and other statutory approvals.

We've worked on all kinds of buildings, big, medium and small. No matter the size, we present creative, innovative design solutions with the same attention and dedication from beginning to end.

This document provides an insight into our design process and what constraints and opportunities have driven the design at this stage. The images and designs in this document are for discussion purposes only and subject to further collaboration with the client team.

REFERENCE: 0240

PREPARED BY: KT

REVISIONS: *

THE BRIEF	
INTRODUCTION	
WIDER CONTEXT	
STREET SCENE	
AMENITIES AND TRANSPORT	
FLOOD RISK	
PLANNING CONTEXT	
INTERNAL LAYOUT	
SPACE STANDARTS	
PARKING AND AMENITY	
HIGH DEMAND FOR ROOMS IN THE AREA	
WHY HMOs ARE NEEDED	
INTERIOR DESIGN	
CONCLUSION	

The Brief

Hmo designers have been appointed to prepare and submit a planning application to convert the existing 6 bedroom, 6 occupant HMO (Use Class C4) into a 7 bedroom, 10 occupant HMO (Sui Generis use class)

Introduction

Description:

This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application to convert the existing 6 bedroom, 6 occupant HMO (Use Class C4) at 2A Christian Fields Avenue, Gravesend (DA12 5NF) into a 7 bedroom, 10 occupant HMO (Sui Generis use class).

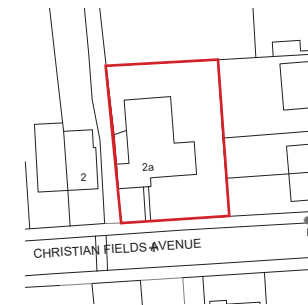
The proposal has been carefully redesigned to address the concerns raised in the refusal of the previous application (Ref. 20231185). The internal layout has been revised in direct response to the case officer's comments, with improvements to natural light, room arrangement, and communal amenity.

The aim is to deliver a high quality, well managed HMO that meets both national and local policy requirements. Compared to the previous application, occupancy has been reduced from 11 to 10, and minor internal changes have been made to improve the standard of accommodation and achieve a better balance between private and shared spaces.

We welcome continued engagement with the local authority throughout the process to ensure the scheme delivers a good quality of life for future occupants and integrates sensitively within the surrounding community.



FRONT PHOTO



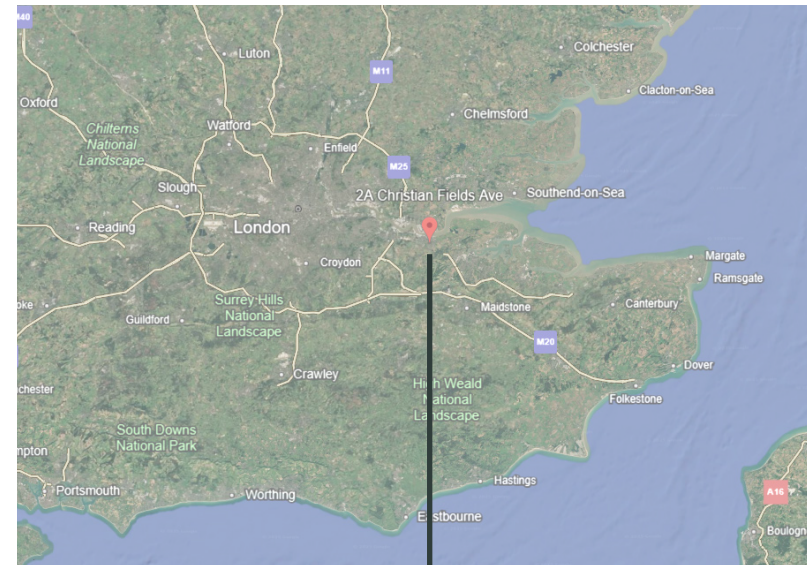
LOCATION PLAN

Wider Context

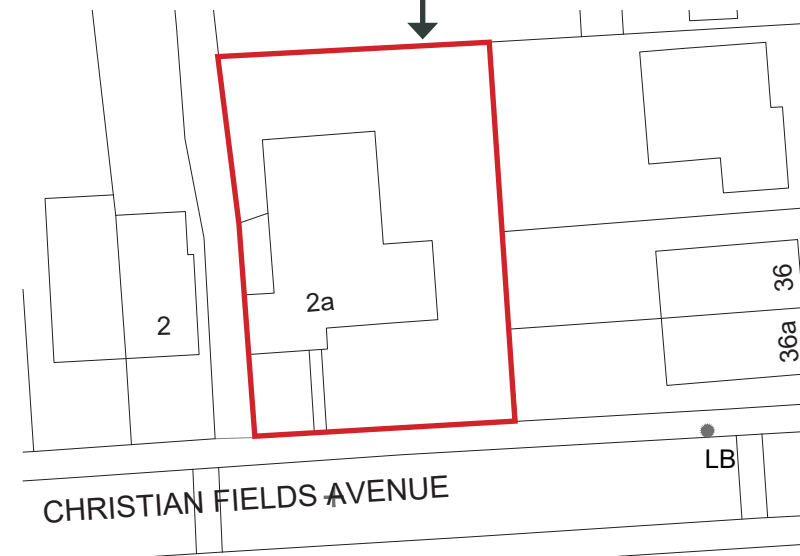
The property is located at 2A Christian Fields Avenue, Gravesend (DA12 5NF), within a well-established residential area to the east of Gravesend town centre. The site benefits from good local transport links, with nearby bus stops along Leander Drive and Christian Fields providing regular services to Gravesend town centre, the railway station, and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Gravesend Station is approximately a 10 minute bus journey or a short cycle from the property, offering high-speed rail services to London St Pancras, as well as regular connections to Medway and other parts of Kent.

The site is in a well connected and sustainable location, making it ideal for young professionals, key workers, and others seeking high quality accommodation with convenient access to public transport. It supports sustainable travel and aligns with wider planning objectives.



Wider Context



Site Location

Street Scene

2A Christian Fields Avenue is located within a quiet residential street characterised by detached houses, many of which benefit from generous front and rear gardens. The area has a consistent suburban character, with pitched roofs, brick façades, and a generally uniform building line.

The proposed changes are limited to internal alterations only, with no impact on the external appearance of the property. As such, the development will maintain the existing residential character and integrate seamlessly into the surrounding street scene.



1 View - Christian Fields Ave



2 View - Christian Fields Ave

Amenities and Transport

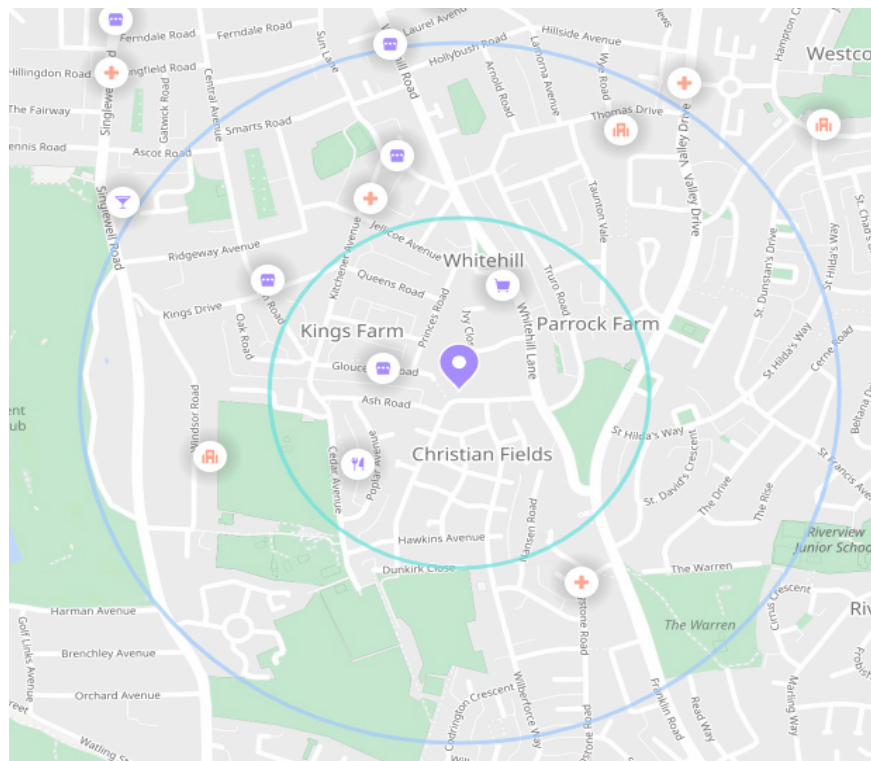
Amenities and Transport:

The site benefits from excellent amenities and local transportation.

+There are supermarkets and other facilities within 0.2 to 0.6 miles of the site, as indicated on the map. This includes major supermarkets, such as Tesco and Lidl, both a short walk away.

+The site is within walking distance or a short bus journey from Gravesend Railway Station, which provides regular services to London St Pancras, Medway towns, and other key destinations. Convenient bus links are also available nearby, with direct routes to Gravesend town centre and surrounding areas.

+The area offers access to open spaces, with the nearest being Woodlands Park and Windmill Hill Gardens, both within walking distance of the site. There is also a smaller green space along Truro Road, approximately a three minute walk from the property.



- 0.25 mile radius (5 minute walk)
- 0.50 mile radius (10 minute walk)



Nearby bus stop (4 minute walk)



Gravesend Railway Station (9 min cycle
- or 32 min walk)

Flood Risk

INTRODUCTION:

2A Christian Fields Avenue is in a Flood Zone 1 area, which has a low probability of flooding.

LOW RISK:

The annual probability of river or sea flooding is less than 0.1% (1 in 1,000 chance) in any given year.

KEY:



Your site boundary



Flood zone 3



Flood zone 1



Flood zone 1



Flood defence



Main river



Water storage area



Flood Risk Map

Planning Context

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- Single storey rear extension with a depth of 6.5 metres, maximum height of 2.95 metres and eaves height of 2.95 metres.
Ref. No: 20180523 | Status: Prior Approval Not Required
- Change of Use from a 6 person HMO (Class C4) to a 11 person HMO (sui generis).
Ref. No: 20231185 | Status: Application Refused

NOTE:

A previous application to convert the property from a 6 person HMO (Class C4) to an 11 person HMO (Sui Generis) was refused by the council and later dismissed at appeal (Ref. 2024/00007/REF). The refusal centred on concerns including overdevelopment, poor internal layout, lack of natural light to Bedroom 3, insufficient communal amenity space, and inadequate detail regarding parking, bin, and cycle provision.

This revised proposal addresses all issues raised in both the original refusal and the appeal. The internal layout has been redesigned to provide improved amenity, natural light, and acoustic separation. The number of occupants has been reduced from 11 to 10, and supporting documents now demonstrate a well managed, policy compliant scheme.

RELEVANT LOCAL POLICY:

- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)
- Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023)
- Guidance for HMO Amenity Standards (Gravesham Borough Council, 2023)

RELEVANT LOCAL PLANNING:

- 20230683 | Change of use from Class C4 six bedroom house of multiple occupation (HMO) to Sui Generis seven bedroom HMO.
- 20230449 | Change of Use from a 6 Bedroom HMO (C4) to an 8 Bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) and retrospective permission for the construction of 2no. canopies to the rear.
- 20210590 | Change of use and conversion from a 4 bedroom house (class C3) to a 7 bedroom house of multiple occupation (class sui generis).

Internal Layout

Internal Layout:

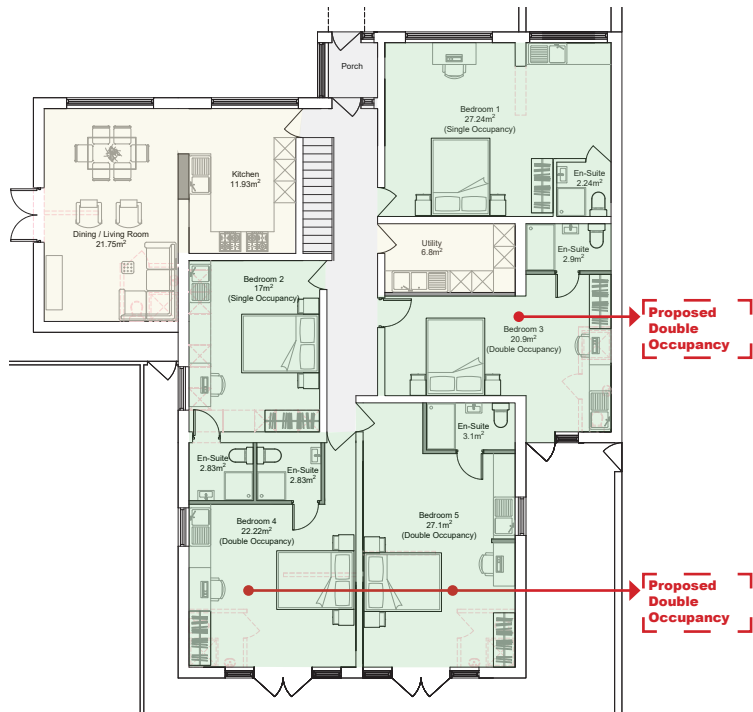
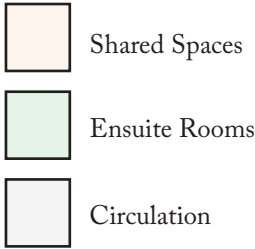
Following the refusal of application 20231185, the internal layout has been carefully redesigned to directly address all issues raised by the council and to provide a higher standard of accommodation for future occupants.

A key change is the relocation of the shared kitchen and dining area to the front left of the building. This new position allows direct access to the side garden and brings in more natural light, creating a brighter and more functional communal space. A separate utility room has been added to provide extra amenity space and serve as a laundry area.

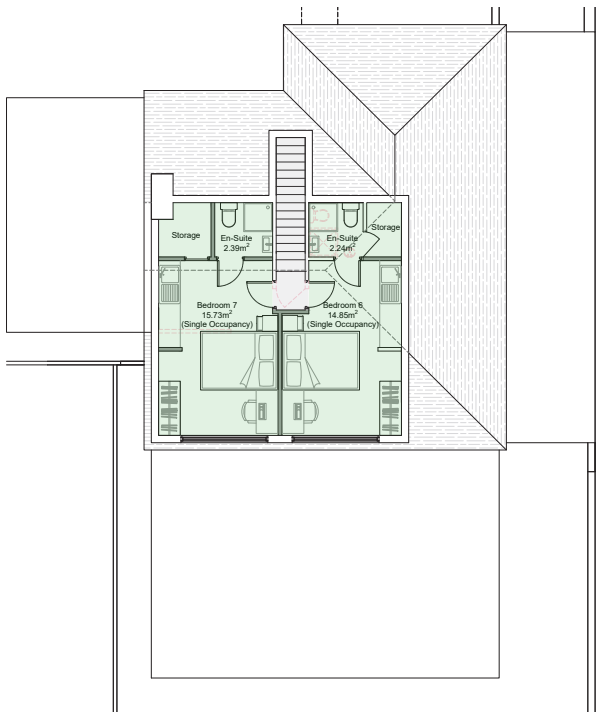
The shared kitchen and dining space has been enlarged to provide a more generous and functional communal environment. Furniture layouts have also been revised and standardised to improve usability and avoid the overfurnished appearance seen in the previous proposal.

The internal arrangement of bedrooms has also been reconfigured. Bedroom 3, which previously lacked adequate natural light, has been redesigned to ensure sufficient daylight and improved amenity. The layout also ensures that no bedroom directly adjoins the kitchen, helping to minimise the impact of noise on private spaces. All bedrooms are now provided with en suites and small tea stations (with no cooking facilities), offering a level of independence while still encouraging use of the communal areas.

In the loft, the space has been split into two large bedrooms, each with its own en suite. Overall, the number of proposed occupants has been reduced from 11 to 10, balancing the generous room sizes with improved shared facilities to ensure a good quality of life for all residents.



Ground Floor



First Floor

Parking and Amenity

Parking:

The site is located in a sustainable and accessible area of Gravesend, with regular bus services available nearby and Gravesend Railway Station within easy reach. A parking survey carried out for the previous application demonstrated that on-street parking in the area is not under significant pressure, with ample availability observed during peak hours.

To support this application, we have commissioned a formal parking report, which reaffirms that the proposal would not create unacceptable demand on local parking. The site's accessibility by public transport and walkable proximity to local services further supports reduced reliance on private vehicles.

Bike Storage:

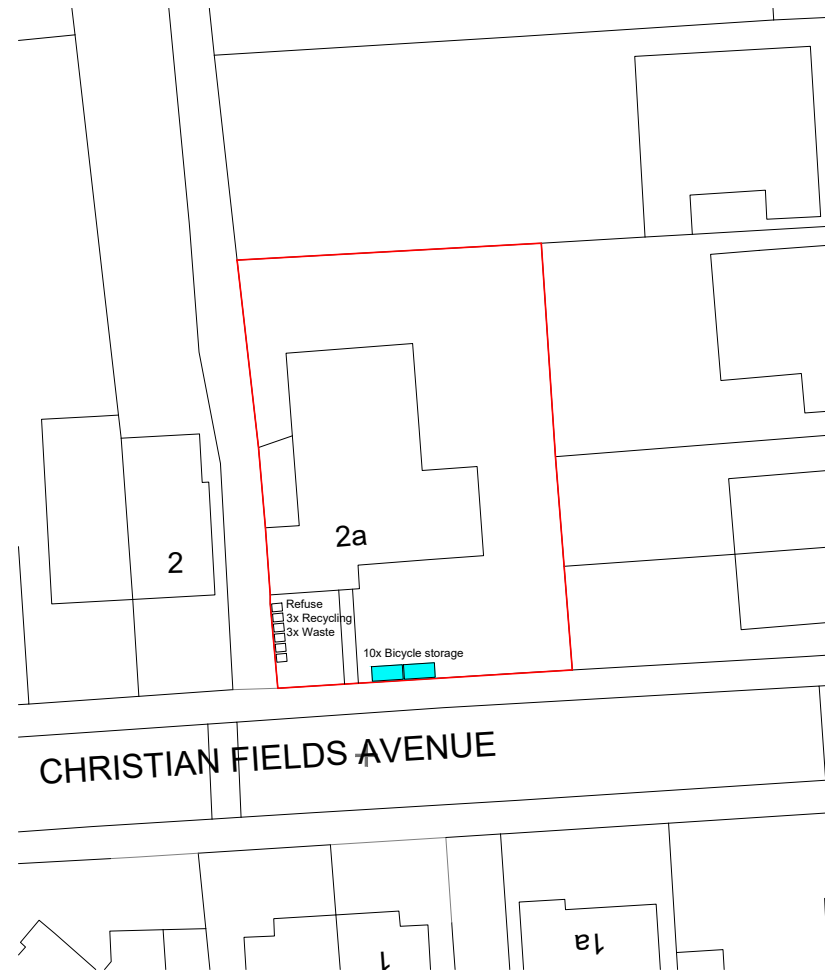
In the previous application, no cycle storage provision was shown. This has now been fully addressed. The revised scheme includes secure, enclosed storage for 10 bicycles located near the entrance of the property for ease of access. The store is covered and screened to ensure there is no visual impact from the street or neighbouring properties.

This dedicated cycle provision supports sustainable travel options and aligns with both local and national planning policy objectives, encouraging low-carbon transport choices for future occupants.

Waste:

Similarly, waste and recycling storage was not included in the earlier scheme. In this revised proposal, dedicated enclosed storage is now provided near the entrance of the property for easy access. The bins are screened and covered to minimise any visual impact and maintain the appearance of the frontage.

These updated provisions reflect a more thoughtful and practical approach to servicing, amenity, and sustainability, directly addressing the shortcomings of the previous application.



Outdoor Amenity

High Demand for Rooms in the Area

There is a well established demand for high quality shared accommodation in Gravesend, particularly in accessible residential areas such as Christian Fields. The local rental market continues to face pressure from strong tenant demand and limited availability of affordable, well managed HMOs.

According to the Office for National Statistics, private rents in the South East rose by approximately 7.4% in the 12 months to May 2025, reflecting continued demand across the region, including within Gravesham Borough.

At the time of writing, listings on platforms such as SpareRoom show limited availability of rooms in well located shared houses in and around Gravesend. Properties offering en suites, larger rooms, and well designed communal areas are in particularly high demand and tend to let quickly.

This proposal responds directly to that demand by making more efficient use of the existing building, providing high quality, fully en suite rooms, generous shared spaces, and improved amenities all in line with local and national standards for HMOs.



Visual room render of recently completed project

Rooms for Rent in DA12 5NF

Search

☒ Rooms for Rent

☐ Rooms Wanted

☐ Buddy ups 1

Showing 1-10 of 36 results

Sort by :

Default sort order

Show results on a map

Save search for alerts

Refine search

SpareRoom screenshot showing number of rooms advertised for rent (indicating supply) - 36

Flatmates in DA12 5NF

Search

☐ Rooms for Rent

☒ Rooms Wanted

☐ Buddy ups 1

Showing 1 - 10 of 68 results

Sort by :

Default sort order

Post ad for email alerts

Refine search

SpareRoom screenshot showing number of 'rooms wanted' listings (indicating demand) - 68

Why HMOs are Needed

Why HMOs Are Needed:

Over the last 10 to 15 years, the UK private rental and HMO (houses in multiple occupation) sectors have grown strongly. The main reason is affordability issues arising from house price growth considerably outperforming wage growth. The average house price is now £250,000, so a first-time buyer needs a deposit of around £37,500 (15%) to acquire a suitable mortgage, whilst average salaries are only at £30,800.

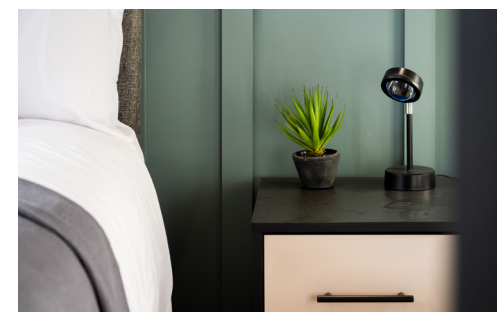
For many people not on the property ladder, rental is the only option. There is also some commentary which would suggest that there is even a growing apathy to house ownership among 21–35 year-olds.

Young Professionals:

Young professionals are increasingly choosing to live in HMO accommodation with fixed rental costs, including all bills, rather than renting their own house or apartment, which comes with higher associated costs. Rising rent prices and low salaries offer little opportunity for young people to purchase their own properties. There is a growing need for high-end HMO properties aimed at young professionals who are seeking affordable living options.

As the nature of work changes, with many professionals working remotely or adopting hybrid models, our proposal includes amenities within the rooms to support home working. Each room will be equipped with high-speed wired and wireless broadband, as well as a desk to create a comfortable and productive environment for tenants working from home. This feature caters to the modern workforce and ensures that the property is suited for both living and working.

Furthermore, millions of people have felt isolated during the Coronavirus pandemic, and HMO properties provide an opportunity for young professionals to build social connections, fostering social capital and helping to reduce feelings of isolation and mental illness in young adults.



Examples Of Work

Interior Design

Interior design:

We, along with our client, are committed to delivering high quality HMOs that prioritise attention to detail at every stage of the design and construction process.

In line with this commitment, we have collaborated with a professional interior designer to ensure that the spaces are not only functional but also embody a cohesive design language throughout. The interiors have been thoughtfully curated to enhance the living experience, offering ample natural light and fostering a sense of harmony and enjoyment within the property.

On the right are examples of the mood boards that have been prepared, showcasing the meticulous design approach and the vision for the interiors.



Mood Board for Interior Design

Conclusion

This revised application has been carefully prepared to address all concerns raised in the previous refusal and appeal. The internal layout has been significantly improved to provide better natural light, well proportioned en-suite bedrooms, and practical, high quality communal spaces.

The proposal now includes a generous shared kitchen and dining area with direct garden access, a separate utility room, secure covered cycle storage, and enclosed bin storage near the entrance all integrated to minimise visual impact and enhance day to day use.

The number of proposed occupants has been reduced from 11 to 10, ensuring compliance with both Gravesham Borough Council's HMO standards and national space requirements, while delivering a more balanced and spacious living environment for residents.

Importantly, this application supports the council's wider housing objectives by responding to the high demand for well managed shared accommodation without the need to construct new housing. By making better use of an existing detached property in a sustainable location, the scheme helps meet local housing need efficiently, while protecting the established character of the area.

Overall, the proposal presents a practical, policy compliant solution that promotes sustainable living and delivers a high standard of accommodation for future occupants directly aligned with the aims of the Local Plan.



Examples Of Work

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