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Application Reference: LA01/2024/0762/F
Site Address: 26 Union Street, Coleraine
Proposal: Change of use from dwelling to 7-bed / 7-person House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Opening

Good morning Councillors, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. This statement addresses the key material considerations, including the condition of the existing property, the proposed use, and the wider housing context.

Existing Property

The property is currently in a poor condition and has not been fully utilised. Without meaningful investment and refurbishment, it would remain underutilised and continue to detract from the surrounding area. This proposal represents an opportunity to bring the property back into active and beneficial residential use.

Proposed Use

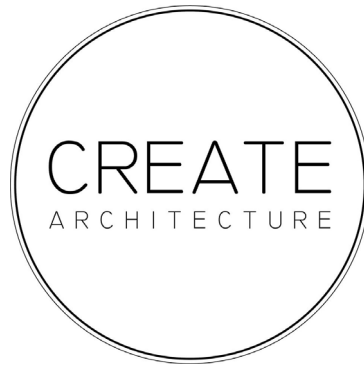
The proposal involves the conversion of the existing dwelling into a 7-bed / 7-person HMO, providing high-quality, professionally managed accommodation within a sustainable town centre location. The increase from a smaller dwelling to a 7-person HMO has been carefully considered and is fully supported by the internal layout, which meets all required space standards and amenity provisions. The level of accommodation proposed is appropriate to the size and configuration of the building and does not result in overdevelopment.

The site benefits from close proximity to key local institutions, including Causeway Hospital, the Northern Regional College, and the University of Ulster Coleraine campus. These facilities generate consistent demand for well-located rental accommodation from students, staff, and associated workers.

A parking survey was submitted as part of the application, which demonstrates that there is adequate on-street parking available in the vicinity of the site, in line with Roads Service requirements.

Importantly, DfI Roads have reviewed the proposal and offer no objection, confirming that the development will not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the local road network or parking provision.

Given this highly accessible location, future occupants are likely to have reduced reliance on private vehicles, with easy access to local services, employment opportunities, and public transport. As such, the proposal will not result in unacceptable impacts on traffic, parking, or residential amenity.



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HMOs and the Housing Market

There is well-established pressure on the local housing market, particularly for good-quality rental accommodation.

Properly managed and licensed HMOs form an important part of the housing mix and help meet this demand in a controlled and policy-compliant manner.

This proposal will make efficient use of an existing building and provide accommodation for seven individuals within a single property.

Without this type of provision, demand would be displaced elsewhere, placing additional pressure on the wider housing supply.

It is also important to acknowledge concerns that have been raised more generally, including on social media, in relation to HMOs and wider issues such as illegal or unregulated occupation.

However, these concerns are typically associated with unauthorised or unlicensed HMOs operating outside the regulatory system, rather than properly approved and licensed properties.

This proposal represents a fully policy-compliant and regulated form of development, which will be subject to both planning control and HMO licensing requirements. As such, it should be clearly distinguished from the types of issues often referenced in those discussions.

This application should therefore be assessed on its own merits and in the context of its full compliance with the relevant planning and licensing framework.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this proposal represents the sustainable reuse of an existing property, delivering clear housing benefits while complying with relevant planning policy.

It will bring an underutilised building back into productive use and provide high-quality, managed accommodation in a highly accessible and sustainable location.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you support the officer's recommendation.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.