

1. Introduction

This Design Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application at 209 New Road, Skewen (Ref: P2025/0138) for the change of use from a former bank (Class A2) to a café/takeaway (Class A3), including a new shopfront at ground floor and a proposed residential unit (Class C3) at first floor level.

This statement focuses on key considerations arising during the application process, particularly those that have generated concern. Broader planning matters are considered to have been addressed through the progression of the application and are therefore not revisited in detail.

The scheme has been comprehensively reviewed and revised in response to consultation feedback, adopting a design approach developed to address the main issues identified, particularly in relation to noise and odour impacts.

2. Site and Surroundings

The site is located on New Road within Skewen District Centre and forms part of a mixed-use frontage characterised by a combination of commercial and residential properties. The surrounding context includes active ground floor uses with residential accommodation at upper levels, reflecting the established character of the area.

The property is flanked by a takeaway unit on one side and a public house on the other, reinforcing the commercial nature of the immediate surroundings. The building has been vacant for a number of years and currently makes a limited contribution to the street scene, and the proposal presents an opportunity to bring it back into active use.

The site benefits from a highly accessible location, with a range of local facilities within walking distance and a bus stop directly outside the property, supporting sustainable patterns of movement.

In visual terms, the proposed external alterations, including a new shopfront, are expected to enhance the appearance of the building and contribute positively to the character of the surrounding area.



Image 01_ Existing Front View

3. Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the change of use of the existing building from a former bank (Class A2) to a café/takeaway (Class A3) at ground floor level, together with the formation of a self-contained residential unit (Class C3) at first floor level. The proposal also includes a new shopfront, internal reconfiguration—particularly in relation to the ventilation system—and minor external alterations to the rear elevation.

The layout has been reconfigured to relocate the kitchen to the rear of the property as part of the commercial use, with associated mechanical equipment and ventilation systems integrated within the building.

Access to the first-floor residential unit is provided via a separate entrance from the front elevation, leading to a self-contained corridor and staircase.

At first-floor level, a room with access to the rear garden has been excluded from residential use and re-designated as a storage area to mitigate potential noise impacts associated with the mechanical equipment positioned on the external wall.

This spatial arrangement and internal reconfiguration have been informed by the need to address environmental considerations, particularly in relation to noise and odour impacts, as set out in the design approach below.

4. Design Approach

The scheme has been carefully developed to respond to both the site constraints and consultation feedback received during the application process.

The design approach prioritises functional efficiency, environmental performance, and compatibility with neighbouring uses.

4.a. Layout and Spatial Arrangement

The internal layout has been organised to ensure a clear and functional separation between the commercial and residential uses. The ground floor accommodates the takeaway unit, with customer areas positioned towards the front and service and kitchen areas located to the rear.

A separate entrance, corridor and stair are provided from the front elevation to serve the first floor residential unit, ensuring complete independence from the commercial use.

4.b. Revised Ground Floor Arrangement

As part of the revised scheme, the kitchen has been relocated to the rear of the ground floor. This change reduces the potential for noise and odour impacts on neighbouring properties. The rear external area, which benefits from a split-level arrangement, provides a more contained and controlled environment to support this use.

4.c. First Floor _ Flat_ Residential Accommodation

The first floor has been reconfigured to provide a three-bedroom residential unit, arranged around a central open-plan kitchen and living area to ensure an appropriate standard of accommodation.

As part of the revised scheme, rear-facing areas have been designated as storage spaces rather than habitable rooms. This approach avoids placing sensitive receptors in locations most exposed to potential impacts.

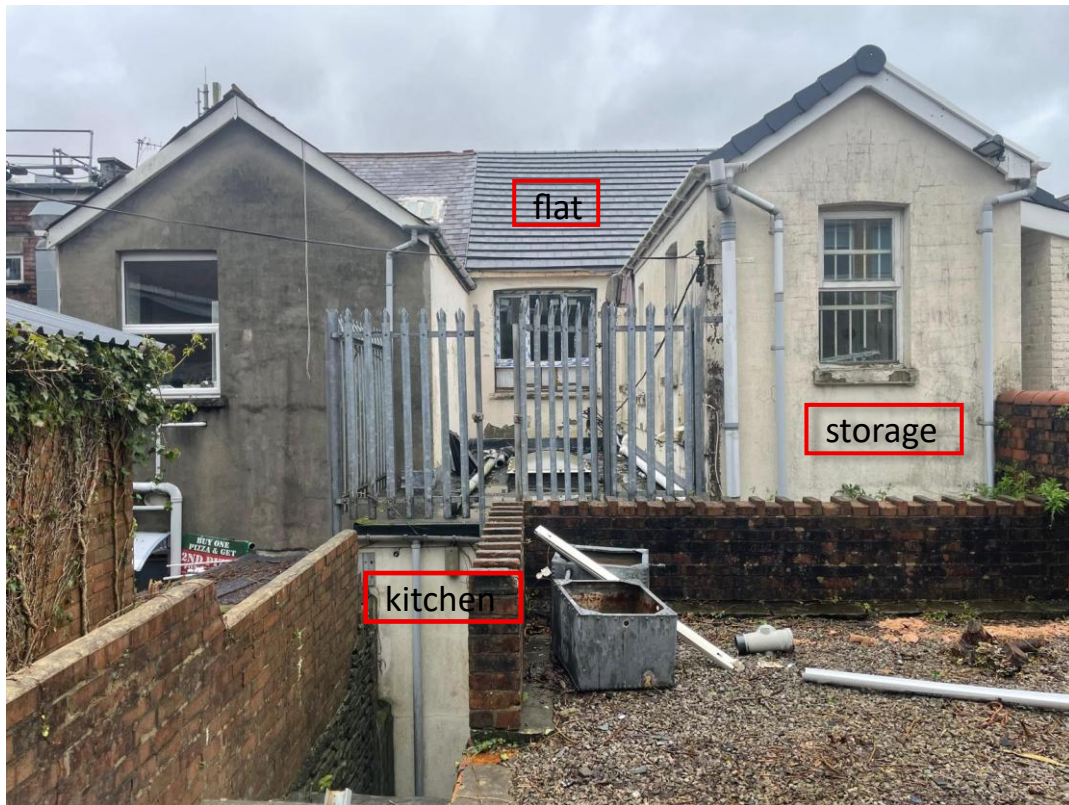
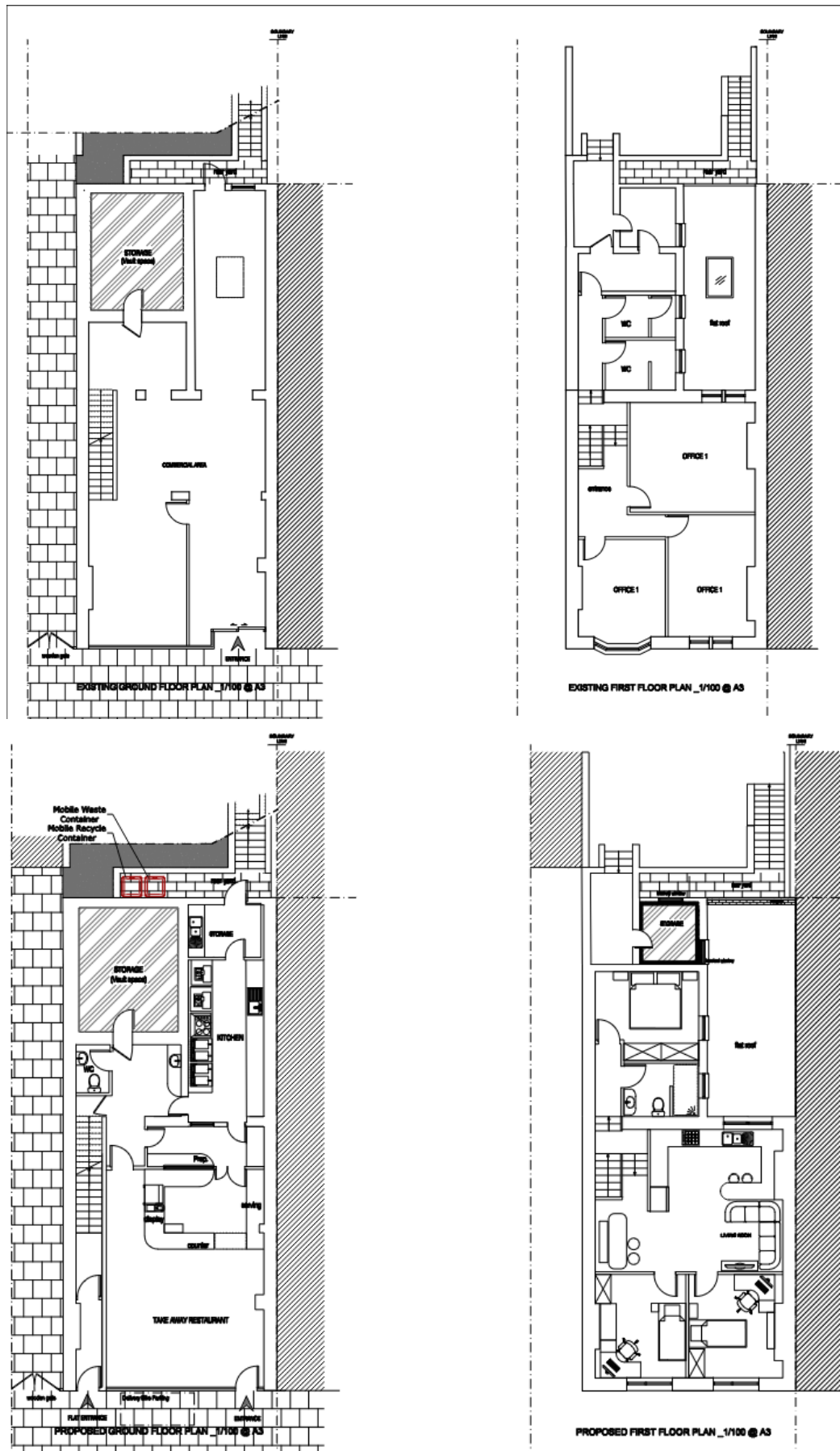
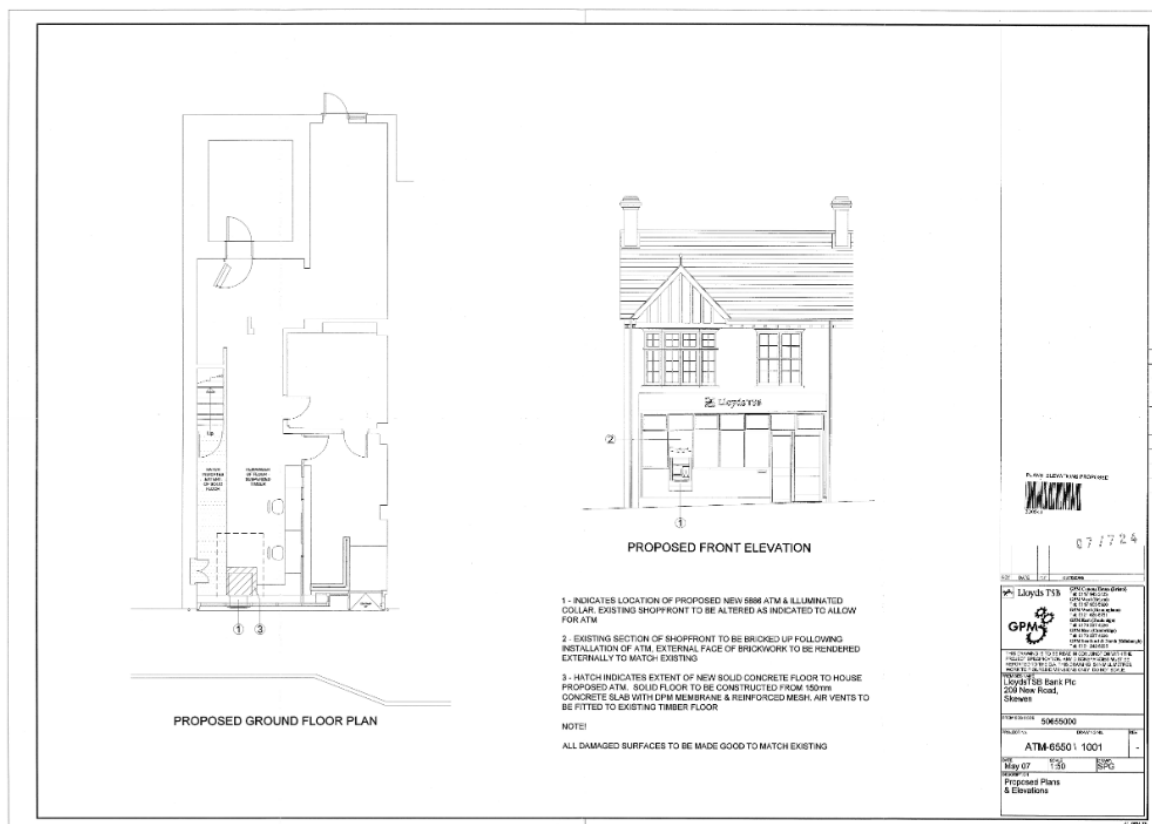


Image 02: Existing Rear View – Kitchen, Storage and Flat



Drawing 01_ Existing and Proposed Floor Plans

This limitation has been carefully considered, and both the layout and mechanical strategy have been developed accordingly.



Drawing 02_ Bank Vault Position in Previous Scheme

5. Overall Ventilation and Impact Mitigation Strategy

The ventilation and extraction system, including the ducting route, has been carefully designed to ensure efficient operation while minimising potential noise and odour impacts. The strategy adopts a coordinated architectural and mechanical approach, directly responding to issues raised during the application process, particularly by Environmental Health.

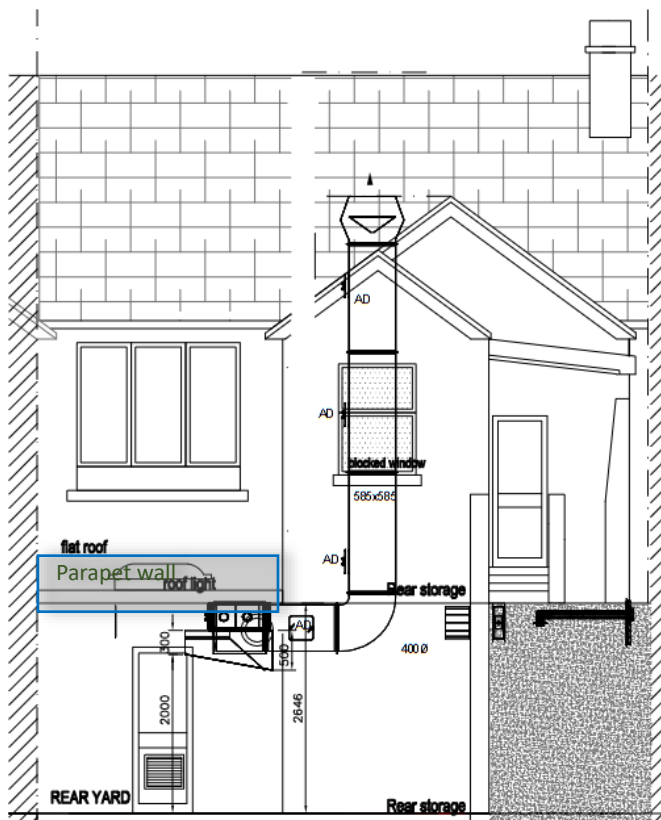
A key design move is the relocation of the kitchen to the rear, with adjacent areas re-designated as storage to form a buffer between the noise source and nearby receptors. A parapet wall at roof level further provides acoustic screening by interrupting the line of sight between the external fan and residential windows, reducing sound propagation.

This approach delivers the following benefits:

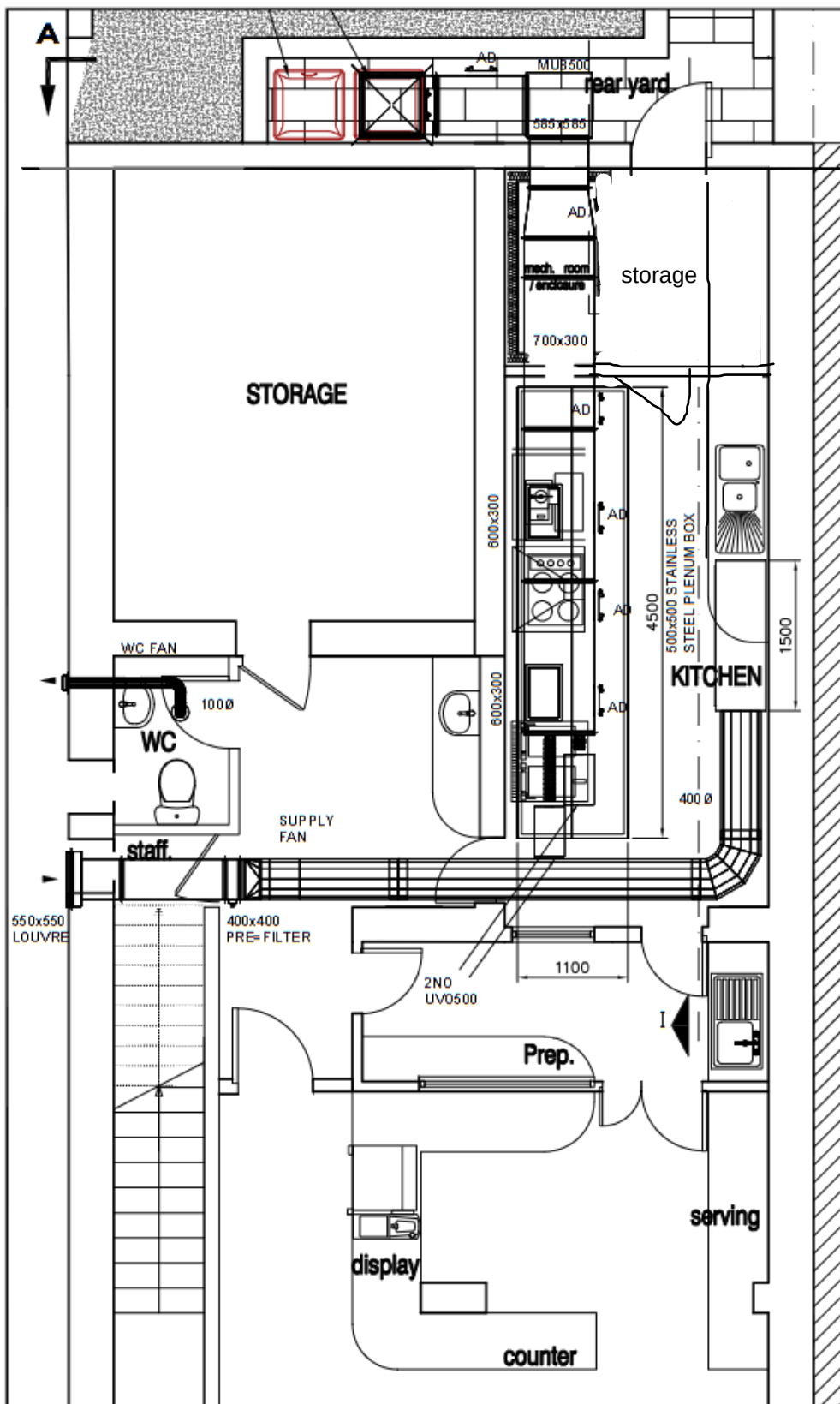
- Reduced duct runs, improving system efficiency
- Improved control over airflow, noise, and odour dispersion
- Direction of emissions away from sensitive receptors
- Additional noise attenuation through parapet screening

These measures work collectively to control noise at source, along the transmission path, and at receptor level, in accordance with established acoustic assessment principles.

The nearest sensitive receptor (rear-facing bedroom window) has been carefully considered, and plant has been positioned to maximise separation distance. Combined with the parapet intervention, the strategy supports achieving rating levels aligned with background sound levels (LA90), in accordance with relevant assessment principles.



Drawing 03a_ Rear elevation (Proposed ventilation and extraction system)



Drawing 03b_ Proposed Plan (Proposed ventilation and extraction system)

6. Ducting Strategy and Acoustic Measures

In the revised scheme, the extraction strategy has been designed to achieve rating levels below background sound levels, subject to confirmation within the acoustic assessment, informed by the acoustic model and site-measured background noise data.

The extract ductwork is no longer routed across the flat roof or above residential rooms. Instead, it is directed vertically along the rear façade, through areas reconfigured as non-sensitive storage space. This provides a more controlled route, removes direct and indirect transmission paths through residential areas, and significantly reduces the risk of *flanking transmission*.

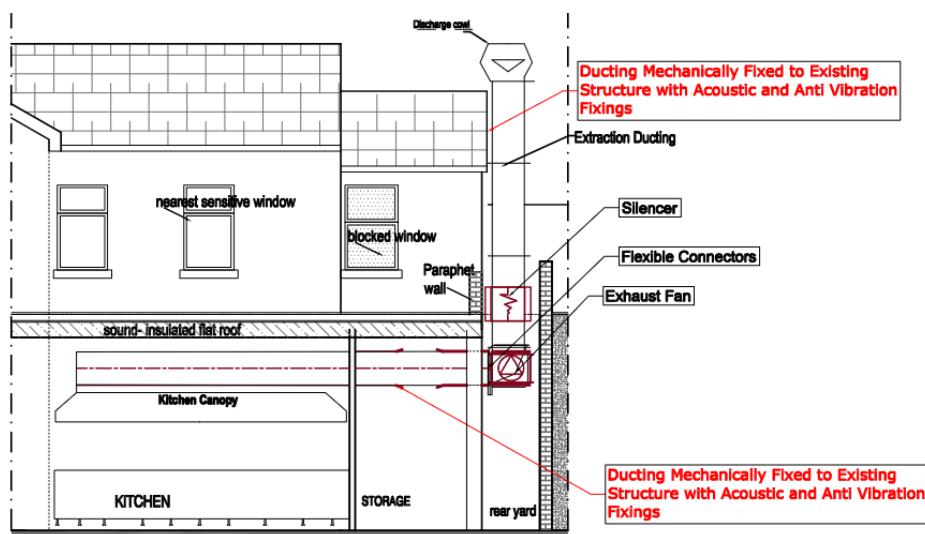
The extract route has also been improved by locating the ductwork along the rear storage façade and terminating the discharge above ridge level. This high-level discharge arrangement supports better dispersion, reduces interaction with nearby sensitive receptors, and limits localised recirculation effects.

Two rear-facing windows within this zone have been fully sealed using acoustically rated infill construction. This eliminates direct sound transmission paths and further strengthens the acoustic separation between the mechanical system and sensitive residential accommodation.

Duct runs have been minimised wherever possible. The acoustic extract fan is mounted externally on the rear façade using anti-vibration spring mounts, with a silencer incorporated into the system. This arrangement controls both airborne noise and structure-borne vibration.

The fresh air inlet has been relocated to the blank side elevation. This avoids interaction between the supply and extract systems within the same courtyard environment, reducing the potential for *cross-talk*, acoustic feedback and *re-reflection*. It also allows a shorter and more efficient supply duct route, reducing turbulence, pressure losses and regenerated noise.

Overall, the revised ducting strategy controls noise at source, limits transmission paths, improves discharge and dispersion, and provides a robust solution in accordance with the acoustic modelling outcomes and Environmental Health requirements.



Drawing 04_ Proposed ventilation unit (partial section).



Image 04_ Location of the kitchen and the area designated for the extract duct and ventilation system.



Image 05_ Existing rear view.

7. Flat Roof and Rooflight Modification

The flat roof above the kitchen and associated storage areas has been upgraded as part of the scheme. An additional acoustic layer has been introduced to improve the overall sound insulation performance of the roof structure.

The existing rooflight, which could act as a weak point for noise escape, has been removed and the roof build-up has been sealed and reinforced. This intervention reduces the potential for upward noise transmission and limits the risk of *flanking transmission* through lightweight elements.

In addition, the existing metal railing at roof level has been removed and replaced with a parapet wall. This provides additional acoustic screening at roof level, reducing direct sound propagation towards nearby receptors.

Together, these measures significantly enhance the acoustic containment of the building and reduce the likelihood of noise breakout at roof level.



Image 06_ Existing flat roof and rooflight and metal barriers (will be removed)

Image 07_ Existing kitchen ceiling & rooflight location (will be refurbished)

8. Amenity Considerations and Shopfront Design

The existing front elevation doors and windows, which are in poor condition and provide limited thermal performance, are to be replaced with new elements of similar appearance but improved quality and efficiency.

The proposed shopfront has been carefully designed to respond to the established proportions, signage zone, and material palette of the surrounding frontage. It will enhance the visual appearance of the currently vacant unit while remaining in keeping with the character of the street.

Materials and detailing have been selected to ensure a high-quality and appropriate design that contributes positively to the overall streetscape.



Drawing 07_ Existing and Proposed front elevation.

9. Hours of Operation

To minimise potential noise impacts during sensitive evening and night-time periods, the proposed hours of operation are appropriately restricted.

The takeaway use will operate without late-night trading, ensuring that activities associated with plant operation, customer movement and deliveries are limited during the most sensitive times.

The proposed opening hours are 08:00–23:00 Monday to Saturday and 09:00–22:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays, with no operation beyond these periods.

10. Servicing and Waste Management

Servicing and deliveries will be undertaken from the rear garden area, where waste will also be stored and collected. This arrangement minimises operational impacts on the front elevation and the public realm.

The mechanical ventilation system has been comprehensively revised, with improvements to the ducting route, discharge point, and overall odour control strategy. The system incorporates vertical ducting routed through non-sensitive areas, an external fan benefiting from rear façade screening, and a high-level discharge point to support effective dispersion.

Odour abatement is achieved through a multi-stage treatment system, including primary baffle filters, pre-filtration (mesh and G4 bag filters), high-efficiency carbon filters, an ozone neutralising unit, electrostatic precipitators, and UV treatment, providing a high level of odour and grease control.

A structured maintenance and cleaning regime has been incorporated, ensuring regular servicing of all components to maintain system efficiency and long-term performance.

11. Conclusion

The proposed development has been fundamentally improved through an acoustic performance-led design approach, including the relocation of the kitchen and ventilation canopy to the rear of the building, and the removal of sensitive uses at first-floor level on the rear elevation.

The revised mechanical strategy presents a coordinated solution comprising an externally mounted fan benefiting from rear façade screening, vertical ducting routed through non-sensitive storage areas, an integrated silencer, and a high-level discharge point to support effective dispersion. The fresh air inlet has been relocated to the side elevation, minimising system cross-interaction. Appropriate maintenance access has also been incorporated to ensure safe and efficient operation.

Collectively, these measures control noise at source, limit transmission pathways, and maximise separation from sensitive receptors, addressing potential effects such as flanking transmission, cross-talk, and re-reflection.

The scheme has been developed in accordance with relevant guidance, including BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, and is expected to result in no significant adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.

It is therefore considered that the proposal responds positively to Environmental Health concerns, represents a clear improvement over the previous scheme, and complies with relevant planning policy. On this basis, the development is considered acceptable in planning terms.