



Since 2020, Planning Potential has secured numerous planning permissions to help transform this former derelict and very prominent, four storey 1920's building in Brighton, into a gym and 21-bedroom house in multiple occupancy (HMO).

Brighton Central Residence acquired the site and then sought permission to develop it into a mixed-use scheme, with a new shopfront and signage, and creation of a new access and storage to the rear. Planning Potential were appointed to oversee the planning process.

The site is located in the Regency Square Conservation Area and on one of the City's Prime Retail Frontages, Western Road. The site had fallen into disrepair, with the ground floor used by a number of temporary pop-up charity shops, since HMV, the last permanent occupier of the site vacated almost a decade ago. The planning applications had to demonstrate compliance with policies seeking to restrict the number of HMOs in a given area, ensure an active frontage, promote a desirability of preserving the character or appearance of a conservation area and onsite cycle and bin storage requirements.

The principle of the proposed use and the elevation treatments drew objection from the Regency Square Area Society. By working collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority, we were able to make a number of positive changes to the scheme and address comments that arose during the determination of the application.

Our involvement in the site has continued since the opening of the gym and occupation of the HMO, with the client seeking to reduce the amount of onsite cycle storage to increase the internal floor space of the gym and the size of the storage space that serves the residents. Evidence collated in the form of cycle space usage counts versus provision and a poll helped convince officers that a reduction in cycle storage, contrary to the Parking Standards SPD, is suitable for the site.

Ahmad Agha, the site owner said:

“It has been a real pleasure working with amazing people like Sam & Henry. Both are extremely professional & very friendly. They always respond to our emails & calls without any delays which is something I respect very much.

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They helped us achieve several planning permissions, due to their great efforts & care they have for their clients. I am super confident in saying that within my experience of dealing with different working people in the UK for almost 5 years now, that Planning Potential are the very best that I have ever worked with.”

Summary of Achievements

- Initial assessment of site prospects
- Project management and preparation of the supporting evidence for the application
- Negotiation with LPA in respect of design.
- Negotiation and liaison with the council on planning conditions, including opening hours.