



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2025

by N Armstrong BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/25/3362144

16 School Lane, Pinner, Harrow HA5 5NF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Danny Morris against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref is PL/3417/24.
 - The development proposed is Change of use: From 6 Bed HMO (Class C4) to 8 person HMO (Sui Generis); rooflights in rear roof slope; parking; bin / cycle storage; external alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I observed at the site visit that the appeal property was in use as a house in multiple occupation (HMO) and there were rooms numbered 1 – 7. The internal layout and openings within the rear and side elevations differed from those shown on both the existing and proposed plans. These differences included that the kitchen / dining area and communal room shown on the existing floor plans were not in place as indicated, although works to create the kitchen at first floor level on the proposed floor plan had been undertaken and this was in use. I have dealt with the appeal on the basis that planning permission is sought for the proposed development as set out in the application and the submitted plans.
3. The development includes rooflights in the rear roof slope and other works. The reason for refusal on the Council's decision notice indicates that the quality and quantity of the internal layout is the matter in dispute. I have no reason to disagree with the Council's conclusion that the rest of the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms. My reasoning below therefore relates to the quality and quantity of the communal living / kitchen space and the internal layout.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the development would provide an adequate standard of accommodation for its future occupiers, with particular regard to the size and quality of the communal facilities.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a semi-detached property located to the eastern end of School Lane, which I observed to be a quiet residential cul-de-sac. School Lane comprises a mix of predominantly two-storey properties with a significantly larger block of residential development at Weall Court opposite the site.

6. The Council does not dispute that the existing lawful use of the site is a 6 person HMO within Use Class C4. The existing floor plans indicate the 6 bedroom HMO benefitted from a kitchen / dining area of 18.18 square metres (sqm), as well as a communal room of 21.20 sqm. The proposal would facilitate an increase in the number of occupants in the HMO from 6 to 8 people. The proposed floor plans show that the property would have a much smaller kitchen area of 10 sqm with no provision at all for any other communal living space. There would be access for occupants to the external garden space to the rear, which would be overlooked by the only windows serving Units 3 and 4.
7. The appellant's statement refers to the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Conditions and Amenity Standards (2020) (the HMO standards), which are primarily relevant to separate licensing requirements. My attention has been drawn to a planning appeal at 93 Headstone Road¹, although I have not been provided with full details of that case. That Inspector considered the HMO Standards to provide a useful source of guidance in relation to appropriate living standards within HMOs. Despite some reference to compliance with 'technical housing standards (2015)', the Council has not provided any other relevant minimum standards to be applied in respect of communal facilities. Consequently, whilst I give them limited weight as they are not part of the development plan and have not been prepared for planning purposes, I have had regard to the HMO Standards as a material consideration.
8. The HMO Standards set out different internal size requirements depending upon the form of the HMO. For a HMO with one person occupancy and a bedroom with separate kitchen and no common room, the minimum bedroom size should be 10 sqm. The kitchen size should be 5 sqm (minimum for 3 sharing), plus 1 sqm for additional people sharing. For the proposed 8 person occupancy, this would equate to 10 sqm. The proposed floor plans indicate that the bedrooms and the kitchen would meet the minimum size requirements within the HMO Standards for this configuration of HMO.
9. Notwithstanding, due to the size of the kitchen and the lack of any other internal communal space, the proposal would significantly reduce the quality of life for existing residents and future occupiers of the enlarged HMO would have very limited communal space. It would result in a more intensive use of the property with a cramped layout. On the basis of the submitted plans and my observations on site, I did not find that the first floor kitchen area would be particularly spacious or suitable to serve the proposed increase in the number of residents. Despite this being a relatively modest increase in occupants, I do not consider that it would provide a high standard of amenity for future occupiers as the only communal space available, or that the proposed development as a whole would be comfortable or inviting for people to use.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would not provide an adequate standard of accommodation for its future occupiers, with particular regard to the size and quality of the communal facilities. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy D3 of The London Plan, The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (2021), Policies DM1, DM26 and DM30 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies (2013). Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that development delivers inclusive environments, achieve indoor and

¹ Appeal Decision ref APP/M5450/W/24/3337694

outdoor environments that are comfortable and inviting for people to use, achieve a high standard of amenity, have regard to the adequacy of the internal layout in relation to the needs of future occupiers, and provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation and living conditions for the intended occupiers. It would also be inconsistent with the requirement in national policy² to ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

11. Where the proposal has been found to be acceptable in other respects, for example in terms of the size of bedrooms, the character and appearance of the area, the living conditions of neighbouring residents, transport and refuse, these are neutral matters and do not weigh in favour of the development. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.

Conclusion

12. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Armstrong

INSPECTOR

² Paragraph 135 f) of the National Planning Policy Framework