
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2026

by K Allen MEng (Hons) MArch PGCert ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/25/3375853

152 Hagden Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 0PD

- 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 Ms Zery Latif against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00673/COU.
 - The development proposed is residential conversion of original single dwelling into 10 person HMO.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The information before me indicates that the change of use for which permission is sought has already been carried out. For the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal based on the submitted plans.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development provides adequate living conditions for future occupiers, with particular regard to outdoor amenity space and privacy.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a substantially extended semi-detached house, in an accessible location, with a variety of services and facilities available. Whilst the original floor area is less than 150sqm, the current enlarged floor area is notably above this value. As such, it is not disputed that adequate internal space would be provided for the proposal.
5. The parties agree that the property was previously operating lawfully under Use Class C4 as a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 6 unrelated individuals. As such, the proposed development to increase the occupancy, would not result in the loss of a family home, nor increase the number of HMOs along Hagden Lane.
6. The property benefits from both front and rear external spaces. Although modest in size, the rear outdoor amenity space would be accessible via the communal kitchen as well as bedrooms 3 and 4 and provide appropriate space for essential activities such as drying clothes, bin and cycle storage, and sitting out in warmer months for all residents. Further, there are a number of public open spaces within walking distance which could be enjoyed by the occupiers.

7. Notwithstanding the above, due to the limited scale of the amenity space and the window locations of the rear facing ground floor bedrooms, when essential activities were taking place, the occupants of these rooms would not be afforded appropriate levels of privacy.
8. Consequently, I conclude that although sufficient outdoor amenity space would be provided, the development would not provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers with particular regard to privacy. The development would fail to accord with Policies HO3.9 and QD6.4 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 (November 2022) where they require development to support the health and wellbeing of all those who use them and provide appropriate amenity space.
9. Similarly, the development would conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) which amongst other things seeks to ensure developments function well and have a high standard of amenity for future users.

Other Matters

10. The development would provide indoor communal areas and positively contribute to the local housing market in an accessible location. The parties agree that sufficient parking and refuse storage would be provided. Noise levels would not unduly harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents, nor would the development put a strain on existing services. Further, fire safety and facilities would be regulated through the HMO licensing regime and behavioural concerns could be appropriately managed. Nevertheless, these matters do not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

11. Overall, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, as a whole, and there are no material considerations, including the provisions in the Framework, which indicate that the development should be determined other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

K Allen

INSPECTOR