



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2025

by **M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/25/3369511

2E Graham Road, Wealdstone, London HA3 5RF

- 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 Shabbir Karimji of Charter Green against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
- The application reference is PL/3251/24.
- The development proposed is the change of use of an office unit to a one-bedroom residential unit.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary and Procedural Matters

2. The appeal site is a group of three office units, 2C, 2D and 2E Graham Road which, following a grant of planning permission in 2021¹, have been built to replace a block of garages on the site. The proposed development was described on the planning application form and the appeal form as a “change of use of vacant office units to three (3) one-bedroom residential units”; the submitted Planning Statement and drawings also all referred to the change of use of all three units. However, notwithstanding all this, it is clear from the Council’s officer report and the appellant’s appeal submissions that the proposal in fact relates only to one of the three units, Unit E, and I have determined the appeal on this basis. I have used an amended description of the proposal in the banner heading above to reflect this.
3. I have also been appointed to determine another appeal on the same site, relating to all three units (PINS Ref: APP/M5450/W/25/3369492). The main issues in the two appeals are quite distinct, so this other appeal is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposed loss of employment land and premises has been adequately justified; and
 - Whether the proposed residential unit would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers, with particular regard to adequate daylight and outlook.

¹ LPA Ref: P/4313/20

Reasons

Employment land and premises

5. The appeal site is adjacent to, though just outside the boundary of, Wealdstone town centre. On its eastern side, across a very narrow pedestrian alleyway, is Sovereign House, a two-storey office block which is within the town centre. To the west, the site is bounded by dwellings on Wolseley Road. The three units are arranged perpendicular to Graham Road along the east side of the appeal site, with a forecourt on the western side – Unit 2E is the one furthest from the site entrance. Towards the front of the site, the forecourt is wide enough to accommodate a vehicle parking space, though it narrows towards the rear and is therefore a tight and constrained space². A timber panel fence ranging from approximately 1.8m to 2m in height separates the appeal site from the shallow rear gardens or yards of Nos 74 to 78 Wolseley Road.
6. Policy DM32 of the 2013 Harrow Development Management Local Plan (“the DMLP”) seeks to support the retention of office space to support the local market. It says that “the redevelopment or change of use of offices outside of designated town centres and business use areas will be permitted where the building has been vacant for more than 12 months and there is genuine evidence that all opportunities to re-let the accommodation have been fully explored, including evidence of suitable marketing over a 12 month period”.
7. The Planning Statement which formed part of the planning application indicated that the three units on the site had been marketed without success. It included a screenshot showing a listing on the Zoopla website, indicating that the unit had originally been listed on 5 July 2022. It also included a copy of an e-mail dated 15 November 2024 from LBC Estates, a local estate agency, stating that “the properties” had been marketed since October 2022 but “we have not had any takers until today”. The appeal statement also included a photograph taken in October 2024 showing an LBC Estates marketing board, albeit that this was affixed to the adjacent Sovereign House building, and an image of a display advertisement with London Properties, a second local agency.
8. The appellant states that unit E was initially marketed at a rental of £16,800 per annum, as were the other units on the site, but as no-one came forward the price was reduced to £15,000. However, there is little further detail before me – I was provided with a link to the Zoopla website with office listings for Harrow, but no substantive evidence which would have provided (for example) a like-for-like comparison of rentals. The other information is also somewhat hazy – notwithstanding the possible ambiguity of that last sentence of the LBC Estates e-mail, the title of that message refers to units 2A, B, C and D, and not to unit 2E which is the subject of this appeal. It was also not clear when the price was reduced, or on what other terms the unit was being marketed.
9. Furthermore, at the time of my site visit units D and E were occupied by a business. While I have no information about the terms of that occupancy, I understand that that is, or has been, only a short-term arrangement. Nevertheless, it shows that it has been possible to find an occupier for the appeal property.

² At the time of my visit, two cars were parked end-to-end in the space, though there is not room for vehicles to turn or pass each other within the site.

10. Taking all of this together, I am not satisfied that adequate information has been provided which would justify the proposed loss of employment land and premises. As such, the proposal conflicts with Policy DM32 of the DMLP, the principal relevant provision of which I have set out above. It also conflicts with Policy E1 of the London Plan 2021 which, among other things, seeks to support the retention of low-cost or flexible office space.

Living conditions

11. The rear of the unit has small, high-level windows with obscure glass, which open onto the narrow alleyway between the unit and Sovereign House. There are large windows on the front elevation, which face onto the forecourt in front of the premises, which is tightly enclosed and partly overshadowed by mature or semi-mature trees at the rear of the dwellings on Wolseley Road.
12. No daylight study has been submitted for the scheme. The bedroom would be dependent on two of the high-level windows. The small size of the windows, and their position next to the narrow alleyway, would be likely to limit the daylight they would receive. They would also offer nothing in the way of outlook. The larger front windows would serve the living room and kitchen area of the dwelling. The Council's position is that outlook and daylight in respect of the living room would be acceptable. Even so, this could not be said of the bedroom; the lack of daylight and outlook would make it a gloomy and confined space.
13. As such, the proposed unit would not provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers. The development would therefore conflict with Policies DM1 and DM26 of the DMLP, and Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021. Together, and among other things, these policies seek to achieve development with a high standard of amenity, including by ensuring adequate daylight and outlook.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector