



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2026

by **C Coles MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/25/3360673

Rowly House, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8PG

- 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 A Hardman of The House Vet Ltd against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application reference is WA/2024/01955.
 - The development was originally described as 'Retrospective change of use of first floor for use as veterinary practice and residential accommodation for staff'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use of first floor from residential use (Use Class C3) to mixed use veterinary and staff accommodation (Sui Generis) at Rowly House, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8PG in accordance with the terms of the application reference WA/2024/01955 and the plans numbered: Existing Site Plan (P1-4); Location Plan (P1-5); Existing Roof Plan (P1-3); Existing Floor Plans (P1-2); Existing Elevations (P1-1).

Procedural Matter

2. At the time of my site visit the change of use had already taken place. The description of development set out in the banner heading is taken from the application form and includes the term 'retrospective' which does not constitute an act of development. The description of development in the formal Decision set out above is taken from the Council's decision notice and the appellant's appeal form. The Council dealt with the development on that basis and so have I.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development:
 - on the provision of residential accommodation in the borough; and
 - on the living conditions of the neighbouring properties, with specific regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the rural settlement of Rowly and is bound by other commercial and residential development set amongst wider open countryside and woodland.

5. The appeal building is two-storey with commercial use as a veterinary practice on the ground floor with parking to the front and rear garden access. The first floor was a self-contained dwelling but has since been converted into part of the veterinary practice with part residential use retained for staff accommodation which the planning application which is the subject of this appeal sought to regularise.

Provision of Residential Accommodation

6. The first floor of the appeal site has been converted from a self-contained residential unit to part veterinary practice and part ancillary residential accommodation in connection with the veterinary practice. The justification for the change was based on animal welfare considerations and to comply with standards as part of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS).
7. In respect of animal welfare, there was a need to provide separate areas for dogs and cats to be accommodated to reduce stress levels on the cats, which led to the utilisation of the first floor of the premises for cats to be hospitalised and for surgical procedures.
8. As part of the PSS the vets practice also provides out-of-hours care with members of staff required to be on call for emergencies and to meet the care requirements for the animals. Part of the first floor accommodation has therefore been retained for residential use providing staff accommodation that is ancillary to the needs of the business.
9. Policy DM26 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2 (WBLPP2) states that proposals for employment development should not result in a net loss of residential units unless justified by a clear economic need.
10. The change of use has resulted in the loss of an independent residential property but not a residential use. Ancillary residential accommodation is retained within the first floor for use by staff providing out of hours care and being on call.
11. The appellant has demonstrated the economic need for the expansion of the business into the first floor to provide separate accommodation for cats and dogs and residential accommodation for staff. I have not been provided with substantial information that disputes the need for expansion of the business. Allowing the existing business to expand supports the rural economy and prevents the business needing to relocate elsewhere.
12. The appellant has expressed a willingness to enter into a condition requiring the self-contained residential accommodation to be reinstated once the use of the veterinary practice ceases to operate, however, I agree with the Council that such a condition would not meet the tests in paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) regarding reasonableness and precision. In any event, I do not consider the imposition of the condition necessary to make the development acceptable.
13. The Council have confirmed they do not have a 5 year housing land supply and that the housing supply equates to 3.5 years. This figure has not been disputed. Despite the lack of 5 year housing land supply, the loss of a single independent residential unit to ancillary residential accommodation would not on its own, have a significant impact on the housing land supply in the Borough. In this particular set

of circumstances, I consider the economic justification for the development outweighs the loss of an independent residential unit.

14. In conclusion, the development would comply with policy DM26 of the WBLPP2 as the appellant has justified the loss of a residential unit with a clear economic need for the expansion.

Living Conditions

15. Policy DM5 of the WBLPP2 states that development should avoid harm to the amenity of future occupants and existing occupants of nearby land, buildings and residences including by way of overlooking, loss of daylight or sunlight, or overbearing appearance. Aural factors are also considered when assessing planning applications and impact on neighbouring properties.
16. With the appeal, the appellant has submitted a noise assessment in respect of the effect of the change of use of the first floor of the premises from a residential unit to use as a veterinary practice and ancillary staff accommodation. I have applied the tests in *Holburn Studios Ltd* and the noise assessment passes the substantive and procedural tests. The noise assessment does not involve a fundamental change to the application and the Council have had opportunity to respond to the noise assessment within the appeal timetable. Objectors to the application have been notified of the appeal and given opportunity to comment on the documents in the appeal submission. No representations from the Council or interested parties have been received in relation to the appeal documents.
17. The noise assessment confirms that the development does not result in an adverse or significant adverse noise impact or harm to the health or amenity of the occupants of the neighbouring dwellings.
18. On the basis of the evidence before me, the development does not result in harm to the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties and complies with policies DM1 and DM5 of the WBLPP2. These policies seek to avoid significant harm to the health or amenity of occupants of nearby land and buildings.

Other Matters

19. I note the comments relating to noise disturbance and intensification of the use of the premises, loss of residential accommodation, compatibility with surrounding residential uses, impact on parking and concerns regarding the internal layout of the first floor. These issues have been addressed by the case officer report and I have no reason to take a different view. With regards to a lack of marketing for the loss of the residential accommodation, marketing is not required under policy DM26 of the WBLPP2. Matters relating to the separate application for kennelling facilities are not part of this appeal for consideration.
20. The property is located within the Green Belt. There are no external alterations associated with the change of use and in this respect, the development preserves the openness of the site, both visually and spatially, and does not conflict with any of the five Green Belt purposes noted in Paragraph 143 of the Framework.

Conditions

21. I have had regard to the planning condition that has been suggested by the Council and considered it against the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance.
22. As the appeal is retrospective with no external alterations there is no need to impose a time limit, plans or materials condition.

Conclusion

23. The development complies with the Development Plan when taken as a whole and there are no material considerations which indicate a decision should be taken other than in accordance with the Development Plan. The appeal is allowed.

C Coles

INSPECTOR