



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 November 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/W/25/3372865

202A Preston Road, Wembley HA9 8PA

- 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 IHRC International Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
- The application reference is 25/1765.
- The development proposed is a change of use from Use Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to Use Class C4 (House in Multiple Occupation) for up to six unrelated occupants in four rooms.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issues

2. The proposed development is the change of use of an existing self-contained dwellinghouse – a flat above a ground-floor commercial premises – to a House in Multiple Occupation (“HMO”) for six people. The proposed HMO would have a communal kitchen/living/dining room on the first floor, and four bedsit rooms – two two-person rooms on the first floor, and two one-person rooms on the converted loft floor¹.
3. The decision notice issued by the Council gave five reasons for which planning permission had been refused. Four related to various aspects of living conditions within the proposed HMO, and I have dealt with these matters – the functionality of bedroom space, the size of and suitability of kitchen space, the provision of communal internal amenity space, and the provision of facilities for washing and drying laundry – in turn within the first main issue.
4. Accordingly, the main issues in the appeal are:
 - Whether the proposed HMO would provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers; and
 - Whether the development would incorporate adequate secure and accessible cycle parking facilities.

Reasons

Living conditions

5. Policy BH7 of the 2022 Brent Local Plan (“the BLP”) states that accommodation with shared facilities such as HMOs should be of an acceptable quality, meeting

¹ Planning permission for a rear dormer, front rooflights, and other external alterations was granted in January 2025 – LPA Ref: 24/3189

appropriate standards for the needs of its occupants, including external amenity space, and appropriate communal facilities. The Council's 2022 *Houses in Multiple Occupation* Supplementary Planning Document ("the SPD") provides guidance on a range of matters relating to proposals for HMOs, including setting those "appropriate standards", and it is a material consideration for this appeal.

6. Recognising that bedrooms within HMOs are more likely to be occupied for greater periods than bedrooms for households in self-contained dwellings, the SPD advises that they should be adequately sized, and have suitable facilities. It states that bedrooms within HMOs should have a minimum floor area of 7.5m² for a single bedroom, and 11.5m² for a two-person room (not including any space occupied by ensuite facilities). The Council was satisfied that the four bedrooms would comply with the space requirement of the SPD².
7. In terms of facilities, the SPD requires that bedrooms should contain suitable furniture including a bed, bedside table, desk and chair, chest of drawers and wardrobe. The four bedrooms are shown with beds; rooms 1 and 2 (the two double rooms) are also shown with a double settee each, and units which – I assume – are the fridge and sink described in the planning statement. However, in all four rooms the bedside tables and desks and chairs which form part of the basic requirements are absent. While the settees could presumably be omitted from rooms 1 and 2 to free up space (though removing the "sit" element of their "bedsit" description) It is not clear from the evidence before me that all the bedrooms would be capable of comfortably performing their intended function.
8. In respect of kitchens, the SPD states that for every 3 households, or 5 people (whichever is the lower) a kitchen space of at least 5.5m² is required; it says that each single kitchen set should have a sink and drainer, a minimum four ring hob with grill and oven, a refrigerator/freezer, and adequate worktop and storage. The SPD also advises that a single kitchen can be doubled up to meet the minimum space to accommodate no more than 6 households or 10 people. The submitted drawings for the appeal scheme show only one kitchen sink, one cooker³, and limited worktop space given that it would need to serve six residents; they also give no indication of what fridge or freezer provision would be made. Bedrooms 1 and 2 would each have their own fridge and sink, but this would not eliminate the need for occupiers of those rooms to use the shared kitchen for many purposes, including cooking food. Based on the submitted information, there would be insufficient kitchen facilities to meet the needs of six residents.
9. A minimum kitchen floorspace of 11m² would be needed to serve six residents. For *all* communal indoor amenity space, the SPD says that there should be at a total of at least 5m² per occupant; this can include the kitchen area, but there should be a minimum of 16.5m² for living and dining area. The *total* floor space of the combined kitchen/living/dining room would be around 20.2m², so it would fall well below that required by the SPD. The SPD also says that there should be a suitable-sized dining table and sufficient chairs for all occupants, and soft chairs in the living area for all occupants. The submitted drawings show a dining table and chairs for four, and an L-shaped five-seater settee. The internal communal amenity

² Though I note that all four include narrow corridor areas inside their doorways, and the SPD says that such spaces which are less than 1.2m wide will not count towards room sizes, so it may be that the "effective" room size is slightly smaller than shown on the plans

³ Which may be intended to be one with a six ring hob, but even this would fall short of the SPD required provision.

space would be too small, and with too few facilities, to meet the needs of six occupiers.

10. Finally on this matter, the SPD requires the provision of an 8kg capacity washing machine for every six households or ten occupants (whichever is the lower). The management plan submitted with the application states that a washer-dryer would be provided in the communal room, as well as alternative drying facilities. These are not shown on the submitted drawings and, given the extremely limited communal space I have just described, there must be considerable doubt that these facilities could be provided in a way which would not further compromise the comfort of residents.
11. Taking all these points together, the proposed development has significant shortfalls against the minimum requirements set out in the SPD, and as a result would not provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers. The development would conflict with Policy DMP1 of the BLP, which requires that all development provides high levels of amenity, and with Policy BH7, the principal relevant requirements of which I have set out in paragraph 5 above.

Cycle parking

12. The SPD requires the provision of one long-stay cycle parking place per occupant, meaning that six long-stay spaces would be required (though the Council assessed the proposal as requiring four such spaces). The submitted transport statement says that the scheme would include a secure bicycle rack located adjacent to the refuse storage area at the rear of the building, and a locker with four bikes is shown on the submitted drawings. No further details of the locker have been provided, though its size appears to be inadequate to accommodate four bikes (and a single height locker of that size could certainly not accommodate six bikes).
13. The Council has indicated that it considers a double-height system should be provided. Given the locker is shown in a space at the rear of the building constrained by refuse bins on one side and a car parking space (associated with the downstairs commercial unit) on the other, it is by no means clear that a suitably-sized bike store (whether for four or six bicycles) could be accommodated in the earmarked space. It is also not clear that there is a suitable alternative space available at ground level at the rear of the building.
14. As such, I am not satisfied that the development would incorporate adequate secure and accessible cycle parking facilities. It would therefore conflict with Policy DMP1 of the BLP, which requires development to be satisfactory in terms of access for all and to be provided with the necessary physical infrastructure, and with Policy T5 of the London Plan 2021 which requires the provision of adequate cycle parking. While Policy T5 applies minimum London-wide standards, it is also supportive of more generous provision where such a requirement is based on local evidence, as would be the case here with the SPD standards.

Conclusion

15. The proposed development would provide flexible residential accommodation in a location with good public transport accessibility, and with a variety of shops and other services available nearby. In view of the small size of the scheme, these benefits in total carry moderate weight in favour of the proposal. However, the

development would not provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers, nor would it incorporate adequate cycle parking. It would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole.

16. While I have considered the benefits of the scheme which have been put to me, there are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector