



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 July 2026

by **Jane Smith MA MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 July 2026

Appeal Ref: 6008246

21 Green Lane, Uxbridge, Hillingdon UB8 3ED

- 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 Harun Mehra against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref is 49724/APP/2025/3002.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 5 occupants (Use Class C4).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. When the application was made, the application form stated that the proposed change of use had not started. However, representations from interested parties allude to use as an HMO (house in multiple occupation) having commenced and there were some indications that was the case at the time of my site visit. To that extent, I am considering the proposal retrospectively. For the avoidance of doubt, I have considered the development as detailed in the application, including in relation to the proposed level of occupation by up to five occupants.
3. The Council's Officer Report did not refer to the representations which had been made by interested parties on the planning application. However, copies were forwarded with the evidence for this appeal. A summary which had been omitted from the report has also been provided by the Council. For fairness, the appellant has had the opportunity to review and comment on both the summary and the representations themselves, and I have had regard to that response.
4. In addition to the two appeal decisions referred to in their statement of case, the Council has drawn my attention to a more recent appeal decision ref 6002695, determined on 12 June 2026 (the Oakdene Road decision). The subject matter is relevant to this appeal, as it also concerns conversion of an existing dwelling to a 5-person HMO. The appellant has had sight of the Oakdene Road decision and provided comments on it, as well as on the other decisions referred to by the Council. I have taken all three appeal decisions into account and am satisfied that no unfairness would arise as a result of my having done so.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the change of use on living conditions for occupiers of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is a bungalow which has been extended at roof level and at the rear. It currently provides five bedrooms, a kitchen/living space, a snug and an upstairs room described as a study. There is a detached outbuilding at the rear, which was furnished with desks and chairs at the time of my inspection. In use as a 5-person HMO, it is proposed that much the same layout would be retained, but that the snug would be adapted to provide cycle storage.
7. Many of the dwellings along Green Lane are bungalows of modest proportions. Some have been extended, but they retain compact footprints and are sited close together, on narrow plots with small gardens and driveways. Externally, the appeal site is hard surfaced, with block walls marking the boundaries. At the front, those are low, which allows easy visibility across the boundary. Both of the adjacent bungalows include ground floor windows close to and overlooking the appeal site, including some in the side elevation of 19 Green Lane which face directly towards the front driveway.
8. Policy DMH5 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part Two (2020) includes several criteria for change of use of dwellinghouses within Use Class C3 to HMOs within Use Class C4. These are applicable in areas where an Article 4 direction has been served removing permitted development rights for that change of use and the appeal site is within one such area. The policy requires amongst other things that HMO uses do not have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining properties. While such proposals may not require express planning permission outside the Article 4 area, that is not a guarantee that no detrimental impacts on living conditions for neighbours will arise.
9. No further extensions, commercial activities, plant or machinery are proposed, and a form of residential use would be continued. If occupied within Use Class C3, the extended dwelling could very feasibly accommodate a single household of at least five people, so the number of occupants may not be materially different. Nevertheless, use as an HMO would increase the likelihood that each of the occupants lived relatively independently, having their own personal pattern of comings and goings. That could include activity at unpredictable hours, including deliveries and visitors, in addition to routine trips for work and leisure.
10. HMO licensing and management measures may help to promote generally reasonable standards of behaviour, with consideration for neighbours. However, that would not adequately mitigate the fact that the proposed HMO use does, of its nature, allow for five individuals to live more independent lives than is typical of members of a single household living together as such. The latter would generally have more opportunity for shared trips and a more co-ordinated approach to other activity such as deliveries and visitors, and that would typically be associated with a lower level of comings and goings.
11. The driveway could accommodate three cars, which accords with the Council's standards for HMOs. The layout appears rather tight but may allow for each vehicle to be moved independently with care, once the access had been widened, as proposed. No highway safety harm has been alleged and there is on-street parking in the surrounding streets. Occupiers would have some options for active travel despite the relatively low Public Transport Accessibility Level score, and cycle storage would be provided.

12. Nevertheless, there would be nothing to prevent all five occupants from operating their own private motor vehicle, should they be in a position to do so. They would also have a strong incentive to park conveniently on the driveway whenever it is available, or directly outside the property. That would tend to intensify the likely level of comings and goings on and around the limited driveway area.
13. Green Lane is described in the Noise Impact Assessment¹ as an established and quiet suburban street, with no significant or unusual noise sources. Therefore, increased noise and activity in and around the site would be experienced against otherwise low levels of general background noise. The neighbouring windows appear to serve main front rooms, from which vehicle movements and other interactions between occupiers would be easily heard, particularly when windows are open.
14. Taking those factors into account, the assertion in the Transport Statement² and Noise Impact Assessment that vehicle movements would be comparable to those generated by a family household is not convincing, when considered from the perspective of neighbouring occupiers. The overall number of additional vehicle movements may be modest, as a proportion of total traffic along Green Lane. However, the very close relationship between the driveway of the appeal site and ground floor windows of the adjoining dwellings means that such activity would be particularly intrusive.
15. The three appeal decisions at Hanover Circle³, Crossway⁴ and Oakdene Road are not directly comparable, since the layout and scale of each property differs. In the Hanover Circle and Crossway appeals, the proposed level of occupation was higher than is proposed in this case. Although the more recent Oakdene Road case was also for five occupants, there were additional concerns about proposed extensions and internal transmission of noise between semi-detached properties. Nevertheless, all three decisions allude to the different and more intensive pattern of activity typically associated with an HMO, which can be more intrusive than that of a single household of similar scale.
16. Despite the relatively low level of occupation proposed, when the specific relationship between the appeal property and its neighbours is taken into account, I conclude that the change of use would have a materially detrimental effect on living conditions for occupiers of neighbouring properties, as a result of increased noise and disturbance. That would conflict with Policy DMH5, as summarised above. It would also conflict with Policy DMHB11 in the Part Two Local Plan and Policies D2 and D13 of the London Plan 2021. Those policies require, amongst other things, that development does not adversely impact on the amenity of adjacent properties and that noise impacts from development which would affect occupiers of neighbouring properties are avoided or effectively mitigated.

Other Considerations and Planning Balance

17. A shortfall in the Council's five year housing land supply is alluded to in the recent Oakdene Road appeal decision. That being so, paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is applicable.

¹ Dale Venn Architects Ltd, Noise Impact Assessment January 2026

² Dale Venn Architects Ltd, Transport Statement January 2026

³ Appeal ref APP/R5510/W/25/3372543

⁴ Appeal ref APP/R5510/W/25/3360554

18. A different form of housing would be provided on the site, which would cater for those seeking generally lower cost, shared housing of this nature. It would also utilise a small, previously developed site. Nevertheless, since the site is already in residential use, any benefit to the housing land supply or efficient use of land would be very modest indeed.
19. The Council did not allege that the living environment would be unsuitable for the occupiers, or that any over-concentration of HMO uses would arise. However, those are neutral considerations, weighing neither for nor against the proposal.
20. The harmful effect on living conditions would be localised, predominantly affecting occupiers of the two adjacent properties. However, given the particularly close relationship with those properties, and the generally quiet surroundings, it would be sufficient to have an adverse and enduring effect on those nearby residents. Development plan requirements that the amenity of neighbouring occupiers should be safeguarded are consistent with similar requirements in the Framework, notably in paragraph 135 which requires that development provides a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. As such, the harm to living conditions carries significant weight.
21. Even in the context of a significant housing land supply shortfall, the adverse impact of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the very modest benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to policies for securing well-designed places. Therefore, the development does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11d.
22. A range of other issues were raised by interested parties but did not feature in the Council's reasons for refusal. Since I have concluded that the development would be unacceptable for the reasons given above, there is no need for me to address those matters any further.

Conclusion

23. The development conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Jane Smith

INSPECTOR