

Planning Statement

55 York Road,
Northwood,
HA6 1JJ

03/02/2026

Introduction

This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application at 55 York Road, Northwood HA6 1JJ, within the administrative boundary of the London Borough of Hillingdon. The proposal comprises the demolition of an outdated rear extension, the retention of a newly built single-storey rear extension (retrospective), and a material change of use from a lawful five person House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) to an eight bedroom, eight person House in Multiple Occupation falling within the sui generis use class. Associated development includes the provision of secure and covered cycle storage, screened refuse and recycling facilities, and landscaped private amenity space.

The application is made in full recognition of the site's location within an Article 4 Direction area. However, the application seeks permission for development that has been carefully calibrated to meet Hillingdon's development management policies, emerging housing needs, and to respect the site's context and the amenity of surrounding neighbours.

Site and Heritage Context

The application site comprises a detached two-storey dwelling located on the western side of York Road. The surrounding area is characterised by a cohesive suburban residential pattern of detached and semi-detached dwellings in traditional brick and render construction. Some properties in the vicinity have been extended or altered, including through rear additions and roof conversions, creating a varied architectural grain.

The property is not located within a Conservation Area and does not lie in proximity to any listed buildings or locally designated heritage assets. It is not within a flood zone or an area subject to surface water constraints, nor does it intersect with ecological designations. The site benefits from a PTAL rating of 3, indicating moderate access to public transport. Northwood Hills Underground Station lies within walking distance, and local services are conveniently accessible.

Drawings and Key Dimensions

The application is supported by a full suite of architectural drawings prepared by Redwoods Projects. These include existing and proposed floor plans, elevations, and sections, as well as details of the cycle storage enclosure and the refuse/recycling store. The proposed single-storey rear extension replaces a substandard and aged structure and is of a modest scale, subordinate in height and footprint to the main dwelling. The extension comprises a flat roof, contemporary materials that are sympathetic in tone, and a recessed alignment that minimises its visual prominence from neighbouring properties.

Internally, the building has been arranged to accommodate eight bedrooms, each with ensuite facilities, supported by generous communal kitchen, living, and dining areas. The gross internal area of the property has been measured at 192.5 sqm, distributed across three levels including the converted loft floor. Bedroom sizes exceed Hillingdon's minimum requirements and the property benefits from a well-proportioned rear garden and side access.

Assessment of Significance

The application site at 55 York Road does not fall within a Conservation Area, nor is it subject to any designation as a statutory or locally listed building. A review of the London Borough of Hillingdon's Historic Environment Record confirms there are no designated heritage assets, locally important buildings, or Areas of Special Local Character within immediate proximity to the site. Consequently, there is no direct or indirect impact on the setting or fabric of any heritage asset as defined under paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023).

The existing building is a detached two-storey dwelling of mid-to-late 20th century origin, built in conventional materials with no distinguishing architectural detailing or vernacular styling. It does not contribute positively to any recognised townscape typology, nor is it identified in the Council's Conservation Strategy or Design and Accessibility Statement SPD as being of contextual importance. Its architectural significance is neutral in planning terms.

The proposed works, which include the demolition of a non original rear projection and the retention of a modest, single storey rear extension, do not affect the principal elevation or the visible streetscene. The form, scale, and materiality of the extension remain entirely subservient to the host building and have no bearing on the visual cohesion of the wider York Road frontage.

In the context of the Borough's Article 4 Direction, which is applied to manage the proliferation of small HMOs and protect the prevailing character of residential neighbourhoods, it is material to confirm that the existing structure retains its single dwelling appearance. The retention of domestic scale, front garden treatment, and roofline means that the visual character of the building, when viewed from the public realm, remains consistent with Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development) and the overarching principles set out in the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (2020).

Furthermore, the proposed development does not involve any upward extension, front-facing dormers, or alterations to the façade that would introduce discordant features. It therefore safeguards the architectural rhythm and visual continuity of the street, meeting the design expectations of Policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 12, and reinforcing compliance with the London Plan's Policy D3 on context-responsive development.

Principle of Development and Article 4

The application site is currently in lawful use as a small HMO (Use Class C4). The proposal seeks permission to increase occupancy from six to eight persons, thereby resulting in a sui generis use. This intensification requires planning permission and must be considered on its merits against relevant policies and material considerations.

The Article 4 Direction in place within Hillingdon removes permitted development rights for changes of use from C3 to C4. It does not prevent, nor does it weigh against, a planning application for sui generis HMO use where such a proposal is policy-compliant and does not generate unacceptable harm.

There is clear precedent for the Council and the Planning Inspectorate supporting similar applications. At 177 Station Road, West Drayton (ref: 47713/APP/2024/1041), Hillingdon Council granted full permission for an 8-bedroom HMO (sui generis), acknowledging that the development maintained acceptable standards of accommodation and did not materially harm neighbouring amenity or character.

More notably, where the Council refused similar intensifications, the Planning Inspectorate has allowed appeals, affirming the suitability of such schemes where they meet policy thresholds. In the case of 95 Harlington Road, Uxbridge (ref: 5199/APP/2022/3396), permission was refused on the basis of potential noise and activity. However, the appeal Inspector found no credible evidence that two additional occupants would result in material harm.

The Inspector concluded that the Article 4 Direction was of "limited significance" in this case as full permission was already required, and that the proposal would not adversely affect neighbouring amenity.

Likewise, at 16 Victoria Lane, Hayes (ref: 75939/APP/2022/3043), the Inspector allowed an appeal against the Council's refusal for intensification to an 8-bedroom HMO, ruling that the internal space, access arrangements, and environmental quality for future residents were acceptable. Objections relating to privacy, refuse and cycle storage were addressed by condition and found to be manageable.

These cases demonstrate that Hillingdon and the Planning Inspectorate both recognise that larger HMOs, even within Article 4 areas, can be acceptable where they are well designed, properly managed, and proportionate to context. The present proposal aligns directly with those outcomes.

Assessment of Impact and Design Response

The proposed development, which includes the retention of a single-storey rear extension, has been designed to integrate sensitively with the host property and the wider suburban context of York Road. The extension is modest in scale, with a flat roof height that remains well below the eaves of the main dwelling, thereby ensuring the overall massing remains visually subordinate and does not disrupt the established roofline. There is no increase in ridge height, bulk, or site coverage that would result in overdevelopment.

In accordance with Policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (2020), the extension responds positively to the proportions, detailing and materials of the existing dwelling. High-quality materials have been used that match or complement the original palette, including neutral-toned render and slim-profile fenestration. The rear addition is not visible from the public realm and does not compromise the streetscene or visual amenity.

With respect to neighbour impact, the development retains appropriate setbacks from all adjoining properties and does not project to a depth that would infringe upon daylight or sunlight availability. The layout has been tested against the 45-degree rule applied by Hillingdon's residential design guidance, and no breach occurs in relation to adjacent habitable windows. As such, the scheme avoids any unacceptable sense of enclosure, overbearing impact, or overshadowing, in accordance with Policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 16 (Residential Amenity).

The extension includes no side-facing windows, and rear-facing openings are positioned at ground floor level only, serving communal living areas. This arrangement maintains a high degree of privacy and avoids any harmful overlooking. The site is enclosed by mature boundary fencing and vegetation, which will be retained to further buffer adjacent gardens. These elements collectively support full compliance with the privacy and outlook safeguards expected by Policy DMH 5, which governs HMOs specifically.

Internally, the property has been carefully laid out to maximise efficiency, legibility and amenity. Circulation routes are coherent and avoid unnecessary corridor bottlenecks. All bedrooms benefit from direct natural light and ventilation. Communal rooms have been placed centrally and to the rear, away from shared party walls, reducing the risk of noise transmission to adjoining occupiers. This design decision is directly responsive to concerns raised in previous HMO refusals across the borough, and accords with Policy D6 of the London Plan (2021) and national guidance on residential layout.

Identified Need

The London Borough of Hillingdon faces a documented and growing need for diverse, affordable, and high-quality accommodation for smaller households, particularly single adults and young professionals. This is reflected in multiple strands of the Council's evidence base and planning strategy. The Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies (2012) sets out a clear objective under Policy H1 to meet housing need by ensuring "a range of housing types, tenure and sizes to reflect the requirements of different groups in the community."

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for West London, to which Hillingdon is party, explicitly identifies a shortfall in affordable private rented housing suitable for non-family households — a demographic segment that includes young professionals, key workers, postgraduates, contract workers, and those transitioning between tenures. In particular, the SHMA highlights the critical role that HMOs play in providing low-cost accommodation, stating that "shared housing options should be maintained and brought up to good standards to relieve pressure on general market housing."

Further, Hillingdon's Housing Strategy (2016–2021), which remains in effect in policy terms, outlines the need to support flexible housing delivery, including shared accommodation models that reduce reliance on family-sized dwellings and support economic mobility. This strategic emphasis has only increased post-pandemic as affordability pressures and inward migration to West London persist.

Within this context, well-managed large HMOs especially those that exceed minimum standards and provide ensuite rooms, generous communal space, and on-site amenities are essential. The current proposal delivers precisely that: eight ensuite bedrooms with dedicated cycle parking, ample bin storage, and a shared living space that exceeds Hillingdon's licensing standards. This is markedly distinct from the type of overcrowded or poorly converted HMO that sometimes drives public concern and enforcement.

Moreover, the recent appeal decisions at 95 Harlington Road and 16 Victoria Lane (Refs: APP/R5510/W/23/3321861 and APP/R5510/W/23/3318771 respectively) demonstrate that both the Council and the Planning Inspectorate recognise the value of such accommodation when provided to a high standard. In both cases, the Planning Inspector noted that the proposals supported borough housing objectives and were capable of being accommodated without adverse impact, especially where clear management structures and high-quality layouts were in place.

Importantly, the present application does not remove a family-sized home from the housing stock. The property is already in lawful use as an HMO (Use Class C4), and the intensification to a sui generis use involves only a marginal increase in occupancy. As such, the scheme provides a net gain in functional housing units for single-person households without eroding the supply of homes for larger families.

Quality of Accommodation and HMO Standards

The proposed accommodation has been carefully designed to provide high-quality, policy-compliant living conditions in line with both national and local standards. Each of the eight bedrooms exceeds the minimum gross internal floor areas set out in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' *Nationally Described Space Standard* (2015), and aligns with the London Plan's Policy D6 (Housing Quality and Standards), which mandates that all new residential development — including HMOs — provide a high standard of internal amenity.

Each bedroom benefits from direct natural light and ventilation through appropriately sized windows. In contrast to lower-grade conversions, every room is supported by a private ensuite shower room with WC and basin, ensuring that sanitary provision exceeds minimum expectations. Hillingdon's own *HMO Amenity Standards Guidance* specifies that for HMOs of this size, a minimum of 2 bathrooms and 2 WCs are required. The current proposal significantly surpasses this, offering a 1:1 bathroom-to-occupant ratio — which substantially reduces pressure on shared facilities and supports better hygiene and privacy.

The shared kitchen/living/dining room, measuring 25.7 sqm, also exceeds the minimum standard set by both Hillingdon Council's licensing benchmarks and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) *LACORS Housing Fire Safety Guidance* for shared housing. It has been designed to accommodate communal interaction while also allowing for personal space, with direct access to natural light, ventilation and appropriate fire safety clearances. Its size also satisfies the London Plan's requirement for functional shared space in collective living arrangements (Policy H11).

The proposal fully anticipates compliance with the *Housing Act 2004* licensing framework for large HMOs. A comprehensive management plan is in place, in line with Hillingdon Council's enforcement expectations under its mandatory licensing scheme. This includes daily management contact, fortnightly inspections, and quarterly maintenance reviews, which align with the best practice principles outlined in the *Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006*.

Importantly, the internal layout is responsive to emerging regulatory trends, particularly those influenced by Awaab's Law (*Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023*), which reinforces the legal duty to proactively manage and rectify hazards including damp and mould. The proposed layout incorporates adequate ventilation, thermal performance and moisture control strategies, ensuring the property can be maintained in a safe and healthy condition over the long term.

Fire safety considerations have also been embedded into the design, with escape routes, fire-rated partitions, and interconnected smoke detection in line with both LACORS guidance and Hillingdon's licensing stipulations. Final details will be confirmed via Building Control and Licensing submissions, but the planning layout already anticipates full compliance.

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers are preserved and respected. The use of the property remains entirely residential in character, and the increase in occupancy from six to eight persons represents only a modest intensification of an existing lawful HMO use. This minor change does not introduce a shift in building scale, massing or visual presence when viewed from surrounding properties or the public realm.

There are no external alterations that would affect neighbour privacy. All windows are retained in their existing positions and orientation, and the new rear extension remains single-storey, flat-roofed, and modest in depth. As confirmed under previous design sections, the extension respects the building line and does not breach any daylight or outlook guidelines, ensuring compliance with Policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 16 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (2020), which seek to prevent harm to adjoining amenity through overbearing form, overshadowing or overlooking.

Concerns often raised in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation — such as over-occupation, cumulative intensity, refuse mismanagement, or noise — have been preemptively addressed through a combination of design layout, controlled occupancy, and active management protocols. The layout avoids clustering of habitable spaces near party walls, and all bedrooms are provided with private ensuite facilities, reducing unnecessary circulation and disturbance within the building.

The communal kitchen/dining/living space has been located to the rear of the property, facing away from neighbours, and insulated from the shared boundary to limit noise transfer. This supports compliance with Policy DMH 5, which requires that larger HMOs maintain acceptable living conditions both within and adjacent to the site.

The property will be professionally managed with proactive oversight. Regular inspections and responsive maintenance are embedded within the management plan. The refuse and recycling system has been carefully designed to be enclosed, screened, and in compliance with the Council's guidance on waste presentation. These measures are intended to prevent the types of amenity impacts — such as bin sprawl, litter, or unmanaged storage — that can otherwise undermine residential character in poorly managed conversions.

To reinforce community integration, a direct point of contact for neighbouring residents will be made available from the outset. During the application and establishment phase, Redwoods Projects may be contacted directly on 020 3781 8008. Once the property is occupied, a dedicated on-site or local landlord contact number will be provided to address operational concerns in real time. This commitment to transparency and responsible stewardship reflects the applicant's intention to support long-term harmony within the street.

Transport, Parking, Refuse and Cycle Storage

The application site is located in a moderately accessible area with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 3, as confirmed in the supporting TfL PTAL map extract dated 3 February 2026. This rating reflects the site's proximity to multiple local bus routes and Northwood Hills Underground Station, which together provide convenient and frequent access to wider destinations within the borough and across London. Specifically, Northwood Hills Station, situated within a 9–10 minute walk from the site (approximately 700 metres), lies on the Metropolitan Line, offering direct services to Harrow-on-the-Hill, Baker Street, King's Cross St. Pancras, and the City.

Additionally, bus services available within walking distance include:

- Route 282: Connecting Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, Eastcote, and Ealing Hospital
- Route H11: Connecting Mount Vernon, Northwood Hills, Pinner, and Harrow
- Route 331: Linking Ruislip, Northwood, and Uxbridge via several key local centres

These transport connections reduce reliance on private vehicles, aligning with London Plan Policy T6 and Local Plan Part 2 Policy DMT 2, which together seek to minimise car dependency and promote sustainable modes of travel in areas of good accessibility. In light of these connections and the nature of the proposed use — aimed at single-person adult occupiers — no additional off-street parking is proposed, and none is considered necessary to make the development acceptable.

There is no evidence of existing parking stress along York Road, which is characterised by wide carriageways, unrestricted parking in parts, and good visibility.

To support active travel, a secure, covered cycle storage structure is proposed within the side/rear garden area. The timber-clad enclosure accommodates up to eight standard bicycles, in accordance with the *London Plan minimum cycle parking standards* (Table 10.2) for sui generis HMOs. This cycle storage facility is fully enclosed, visually screened, and accessible without obstruction. It also corresponds to the design principles outlined in Policy DMT 5 (Pedestrians and Cyclists), encouraging the safe and secure use of alternative transport.

Refuse and recycling provision has been addressed with a purpose-built, enclosed storage unit to the side of the front garden, set back from the street to avoid visual clutter. The bin store accommodates two 240L bins, meeting the London Borough of Hillingdon's refuse capacity standards for eight residents, and is fully accessible to both residents and collection operatives.

Finally, it should be noted that the site lies within Flood Zone 1, as confirmed by the official Environment Agency *Flood Map for Planning* (printed 3 February 2026), indicating a very low probability of flooding from rivers or sea. The absence of flood risk or surface water constraints ensures that the proposed location for both refuse and cycle storage — at ground level, within established building lines — remains viable and policy compliant, with no requirement for flood mitigation measures.

Sustainability

The development represents sustainable reuse of the existing building stock. No demolition of the primary structure is proposed. The materials used for the rear extension are energy efficient and durable. The internal layout supports effective heating and ventilation, while refuse and cycle storage encourage sustainable living habits. No hard surfacing has been added to the front garden or public realm.

Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations

The proposed development is consistent with the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023), which requires local planning authorities to significantly boost the supply of housing (paragraph 60) and to support developments that make efficient use of land (paragraph 124). Paragraph 119 of the NPPF specifically promotes the reuse of existing buildings, particularly where this contributes to the mix and availability of dwellings within sustainable urban locations. Paragraphs 62 to 64 also reinforce the duty to meet the needs of different groups in the community, including single-person households and those requiring affordable or shared accommodation — a need directly addressed through high-quality HMOs such as this.

At the regional level, the London Plan (2021) forms part of the statutory development plan and sets a strategic framework for sustainable growth. Policy H9 (Ensuring the Best Use of Stock) explicitly encourages boroughs to support appropriate conversions that optimise the use of existing residential properties, provided that the standard of accommodation remains high and surrounding character is respected. Policy D6 (Housing Quality and Standards) requires all dwellings — including non-self-contained units — to provide adequate internal space, ventilation, outlook, and shared amenity, all of which are achieved in the current layout. The communal kitchen/dining/living space measures 25.7 sqm, all bedrooms exceed the minimum size thresholds, and each unit is equipped with natural light and ensuite sanitary provision.

With regard to sustainable transport, Policies T5 and T6 promote walking, cycling and reduced car ownership in well-connected areas. The site's PTAL 3 rating and proximity to Northwood Hills Underground Station, together with secure on-site cycle storage for eight bicycles, demonstrate full alignment with these objectives. Furthermore, no car parking is proposed, supporting Policy T6's approach to car-free or car-light developments in accessible areas.

Locally, the proposal satisfies all relevant policies in the London Borough of Hillingdon's adopted Local Plan. The Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (2012) establishes the need to “deliver a range of housing types to meet identified needs” (Policy H1), and to do so in a way that protects and enhances neighbourhood character (Policy BE1). These strategic aims are expanded upon in the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020), where the following specific policies apply:

- Policy DMH 5 (Houses in Multiple Occupation) supports the provision of HMOs provided that the use does not result in harm to residential amenity, that appropriate internal layouts and refuse arrangements are secured, and that parking, transport, and infrastructure needs are addressed. The proposal meets all these criteria, with full ensuite provision, generous communal space, and secure storage facilities.
- Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development) requires that all development be of a high quality of design, be compatible with the local context, and avoid adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. The rear extension is sensitively scaled and complements the host property; no change to the street-facing elevation is proposed.
- Policy DMHB 16 (Residential Amenity) ensures that developments avoid overlooking, loss of privacy, or visual intrusion. The proposed layout has been designed in full compliance with these criteria, maintaining setbacks, fencing, and window orientation appropriate to a suburban plot.
- Policy DMT 1 and DMT 2 (Transport Impacts and Highway Safety) ensure that development does not adversely affect highway function and incorporates suitable access, refuse, and cycle storage. These elements have all been addressed in the site layout and accompanying plans.

- Policy DME1 1 (Amenity and Infrastructure) safeguards local infrastructure and environmental quality, ensuring that developments of this type are appropriately supported by physical and social services. As this is a modest intensification of a previously converted building, no material pressure on infrastructure is introduced.

No departure from policy arises. There are no applicable Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) or Article 4 controls that prohibit development of this nature — the Article 4 Direction is acknowledged but does not restrict this application, as planning permission is being sought for a sui generis use and not a Class C4 conversion under permitted development.

There are likewise no environmental constraints affecting the proposal. The site lies within Flood Zone 1, is not subject to surface water flood risk, and has no tree preservation orders, ecological designations, or contamination history.

Planning Balance and Conditions

In the planning balance, the proposal delivers substantial benefits. It provides high-quality, professionally managed accommodation in a sustainable location, at a scale and format that directly aligns with recent decisions made by the Council and Planning Inspectorate. There is no identified harm to amenity, design, or infrastructure.

Any minor issues can be resolved via standard planning conditions. These may include restrictions on maximum occupancy, requirements to maintain refuse and cycle storage, and submission of maintenance or landscape details where necessary. No pre-commencement conditions are considered necessary.

Conclusion

This full planning application seeks permission for the retrospective retention of a modest single-storey rear extension and the change of use of an existing lawful small HMO (Use Class C4) into a professionally managed, eight-bedroom large HMO (sui generis use) at 55 York Road, Northwood. The proposal has been carefully designed, implemented, and assessed in full accordance with national, London-wide and local planning policies.

The intensification from six to eight residents represents a proportionate and policy-compliant enhancement of the site's residential use. It makes efficient use of existing housing stock, without resulting in any material harm to neighbouring amenity, character, or local infrastructure. The property remains entirely domestic in appearance and operation, and the scheme introduces no adverse visual, transport or environmental impacts. The single-storey rear extension is subordinate, well-integrated, and has no bearing on the streetscape.

The development delivers high-quality accommodation that surpasses Hillingdon's minimum space and amenity standards. All bedrooms are ensuite, naturally lit, and ventilated, with generous communal areas and purpose-designed facilities for cycle storage, refuse, and recycling. The site benefits from good public transport access, and a car-free arrangement is appropriate given the nature of the occupancy and PTAL 3 rating.

The proposal directly responds to evidenced housing need for safe, affordable, well-managed shared accommodation, and aligns with Hillingdon's own housing policies and licensing standards. It satisfies all relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the London Plan (2021), and the Hillingdon Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 (2012 & 2020). It also reflects and reinforces the outcomes of recent comparable planning approvals — both by the Council and the Planning Inspectorate — where intensification to eight-person HMOs in similar suburban contexts has been deemed acceptable.

Critically, the scheme addresses all the typical concerns associated with HMOs — including management, noise, refuse, and transport — through carefully considered layout and robust operational controls. The applicant has committed to ongoing professional management and neighbour liaison to ensure integration with the surrounding community.

In the absence of any policy conflict, material harm, or environmental constraint, and in light of the substantial policy support and demonstrated compliance across all relevant matters, the application is respectfully commended to the London Borough of Hillingdon for approval.

Planning Beyond Limits