

Planning Statement

Site: 23 Garden City, HA8 7NQ

Proposal: Conversion of property into a 4 room (4 person) HMO.

1.0 Application Site and Location

The site is located very close to Edgware town centre and tube station.

The PTAL rating is 6a – excellent.

The site is not located within a conservation area.

2.0 The Planning Proposal

The proposal seeks the conversion of the property into a 4 room (4 person) HMO.

The ground floor provides 2 bedrooms, each with ensuite bathrooms, and a communal kitchen.

The first floor provides 2 bedrooms, one with an ensuite bathroom, and a communal kitchen.

The second floor provides a bathroom for room 4.

Room 2 will be provided 6.25sqm of private amenity space.

A communal garden (38sqm) is provided at the rear.

Secure cycle storage will be provided at the rear.

3.0 Planning Considerations

The main planning issues for consideration in this case are:

- The principle of conversion to an HMO and impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- Need for HMO accommodation in the area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Highway matters.
- Quality of HMO accommodation.

4.0 Principle of conversion to an HMO and impact on the character and appearance of the area

Part D of Policy H9 of the London Plan (2021) states: *“Boroughs should take account of the role of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in meeting local and strategic housing needs. Where they are of a reasonable standard they should generally be protected.”*

Section 4.9.4 of the London Plan (2021) states: *“Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are an important part of London’s housing offer, reducing pressure on other elements of the housing stock.”*

The relevant part of Policy DM01 of the Local Plan states:

“h. Conversion of dwellings into flats in roads characterised by houses will not normally be appropriate

i. Loss of houses in roads characterised by houses will not normally be appropriate.”

The relevant part of policy DM09 states: *“Proposals for new HMO will be encouraged provided that they meet an identified need, can demonstrate that they will not have a harmful impact on the character and amenities of the surrounding area, are easily accessible by public transport, cycling and walking and meet the relevant housing standards for HMO.”*

Section 10.3.2 of the Local Plan states that HMO’s; *“are an important source of low cost, private sector housing for students, those on low incomes and those seeking temporary accommodation.”*

Core strategy policy CS4 aims to maximise housing choice by providing a range of sizes and types of accommodation that can meet aspirations and increase access to affordable and decent new homes. Barnet's growing and increasingly diverse population has a range of needs that requires a variety of sizes of accommodation. HMOs are recognised as an important source of low cost, private sector housing for students, those on low incomes and those seeking temporary accommodation.

The Council recognises that conversions can make an important contribution to housing provision, (in particular smaller units) and that they can make more efficient use of urban land.

The London Plan clearly states that HMOs are a strategically important housing resource which provides affordable housing through the private market, and housing for a flexible work force, which is paramount to maintaining London’s economy. And since there is a known shortage of “low cost” residential accommodation locally, borough wide and London wide, the provision of additional “low cost” good quality HMO accommodation is an important material consideration.

The site is located in a small road which is characterised by houses. The proposal would be in conflict with part h & i of Policy DM01 (*“h. Conversion of dwellings into flats in roads characterised by houses will not normally be appropriate*

i. Loss of houses in roads characterised by houses will not normally be appropriate.”)

However, the policy does not state that the conversion of house in roads characterised by houses is not acceptable but only that it is normally not acceptable.

In this case the road is a small road with a small number of houses therefore, the wider character of the area should be taken into account. The property is located very close to a town centre which has a very mixed character. Also, providing a HMO's very close to a town centre, with an excellent PTAL rating, is an important positive material planning consideration.

It is the applicants case that the current and proposed use would not demonstrably change the character and appearance of the locality, which is dominated by a mixture of flats, houses and commercial buildings.

5.0 Need for HMO accommodation

Policy DM09 of the Local Plan encourages new HMO's "*provided that they meet an identified need...*"

The application documents include two letters, from estate agents. Both letters outline the huge demand and need for HMO accommodation in the area.

Therefore, the applicant has demonstrated a need for a HMO in this area, which is evidenced by the huge demand for the use.

6.0 Impact on neighbouring amenity.

The property will only be used by 4 persons (one in each room). This will be ensured by each tenancy agreement. The Council are also invited to impose a planning condition restricting the number of occupants to a maximum of 4 persons. This level of occupation and the relatively high background levels of noise (being so close to the town centre) means the proposal would highly likely not cause any harm to neighbouring residential amenity.

7.0 Highway matters

The property is located within a controlled parking zone.

The proposal will also provide secure cycle parking for four cycles (one each room) at the rear in the communal amenity space area.

8.0 Quality of HMO accommodation.

The proposal meets the Councils adopted HMO standards.

The units have access to generous sized communal kitchens.

The proposal will provide secure cycle parking for four cycles (one for each room) at the rear, in the communal amenity space area.