

## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

**CHANGE OF USE FROM HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (C4) TO  
LARGE HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (SUI GENERIS)**

Application Site Address:

123 Hook Road  
Epsom Surrey  
KT19 8TP

Applicant details:

Jonathan Rapley  
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## The Proposal

This planning application is submitted by the property owner Mr Jonathan Rapley. The proposal is for a retrospective planning application for change of use of no. 123 Hook Road, Epsom from a House in Multiple Occupation by 6 people (use class C4) to a Large House in Multiple Occupation (for occupation by 7 persons). The reason for this application is due to the Houses in multiple occupation and residential licensing reform, under the Housing Act 2004, effective on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 which has reduced the number of local landlords offering good quality, affordable, accommodation to young persons who cannot afford to buy their own property. The extension of the Mandatory Licensing has meant increased housing demand from this rental sector as landlords leave the market due to compliance or economic factors.

## Planning Policy

Relevant Planning Policy in consideration of this proposal is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) from March 2012, with the central objective to achieve sustainable development. Paragraph 187 advises that Local Planning Authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development whenever possible; and that Local Planning Authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

## The Site

The site falls within the area of Epsom and Ewell District. It is close to the town centre but does not fall within a Conservation Area, the setting of any listed buildings, within the area of flood risk or any other significant planning designation.

Surrounding development is predominantly residential, with a mixture of scale and appearance and a mixed palette of materials is evident in the immediate vicinity. The site itself comprises of a semi-detached three storey dwelling house, with a driveway for 2 vehicles located at the front and a rear garden which is predominantly hard surfaced, housing a safe and secure bicycle storage unit.

The property has been changed into a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) providing accommodation for seven people, under the HMO Licence granted in November 2020. Tenants are carefully selected and screened and generally within the young professional sector. The current occupants enjoy a high quality of accommodation which is approved by the Councils Environmental Health Department for being suitable for occupation by 7 persons; and which is properly and professionally managed. There have been no anti-social behaviour problems or neighbours affected by the change of use currently.

The applicant, which is the Landlord of the property, is registered with the Borough Councils Licensing Scheme. He is accredited through the National Landlord Residential Association and has been a local professional landlord for over twenty years. (The current Licence is attached).

### Planning Assessment

HMO's are flats or houses permanently occupied by more than one household, where each household does not have exclusive access to all cooking, washing and toilet facilities in the property.

Epsom and Ewell Council does not appear to have a policy that directly contends with the creation of HMO's. However the Councils existing and emerging policies look to make an efficient use of Land by providing living accommodation in the more sustainable locations of the District where access to public transport and cycle and pedestrian infrastructure is well established.

In this instance the existing property is already operating as a 7 Bedroom HMO, adhering to the best practice. Accordingly the key issue to consider in respect of the retrospective planning application is the impact of allowing an additional individual to occupy the property and indeed whether or not it is sustainable for an increase of use; for which the Council through the Environmental Health Department has already acknowledged the property is suitable.

As such, the site falls within easy distance of high quality public transport links thus rendering entirely viable as a regular means of transport from this location. There is a broad range of services and facilities within walking distance, with the town centre and rail station only a few minutes walk. In general terms the site falls within a location where access to public transport, cycle networks and nearby services and facilities mean that an individual's needs and travel can easily be met without requiring access to a private car.

### Parking

Although the application does not conform to the minimum parking standards as set out in the Supplementary Planning Document produced by the Council in December 2015, we would argue that student HMO properties should be considered as a separate entity as occupants have very low car ownership and for the following reasons detailed. The site benefits from provision of two car parking spaces, however the current household comprise only one car owning individual and from experience most occupants do not have use of a car, and it is expected that this provision will be below the future proposed occupants. This is typically the case with most HMO's as in practice occupants do not have access to a private vehicle, hence why there is not demand for such Habitation is less sustainable and more rural areas.

All occupants of the HMO are provided with access to the covered and secure cycle parking at the rear of the property.

## Conclusion

These proposals are to a property which is demonstrably sustainable and contributes to the supply of housing within Epsom and Ewell Borough and in particular to a sector of the market that is struggling with high house prices and rent i.e. students living away from their family home and young professionals.

The property has been developed sustainably and been operating as a 7 bedroom HMO for some time, has sufficient onsite infrastructure, and is not found to have been to lead to any adverse harm to the locality, thus we believe it will be beneficial to the local area to grant planning permission.