



Officer Report

Application Number: HGY/2026/0679
Application Type: Full planning permission
Address: 178 Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, London, N17 6AP
Proposal: Change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a small-scale 5-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation for a maximum of 5 residents (Use Class C4) (Retrospective application).
Case Officer: Neil McClellan
Valid Date: 10/03/2026
Applicant: Reno Porcaro
Agent: shivam Sagwal

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed Development

Change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a small-scale 5-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation for a maximum of 5 residents (Use Class C4) (Retrospective application).

Site and Surroundings

The application property is a two storey mid-terraced dwelling house, with an existing ground floor rear extension.

The site is not located within a conservation area.

The site is located within the area of the borough covered by an Article 4 direction removing permitted development rights for changes of use from Class C3 to Class C4. It also within Haringey's designated Family Housing Protection Zone.

Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

The following history is considered relevant to the current application.

ENF/2025/1000 – Enforcement investigation into the unauthorised conversion of dwelling house (Class C3) into a small-scale HMO (Class C4) with 5 occupants in 3 households. Investigation is ongoing with further action pending the outcome of the current planning application.

REPRESENTATIONS

One objection has been received from a nearby local resident raising the following concerns:

- Haringey's Article 4 Direction was enacted to protect the stock of single-family accommodation and has been applied to this part of the borough since 2013.
- There are already 4 HMOs of similar properties nearby (Nos. 172, 188, 190 and 218). The cumulative impact of an additional HMO in this location risks undermining the local stock of family homes - of particular importance to the sustainability of nearby primary schools and nurseries.

A councillor has also commented on the application as follows:

- The property is tenanted and I have seen inside. It is immaculate, very well kept, with very happy tenants. The property has an extension and so is larger than the average houses on the road. The owners have been told that it falls within an area where most houses are considered too small to be an HMO, but the owners have provided details showing that the size of the extended property is large enough to fit our rules.
- Could we consider the property in the light of its actual current size, rather than according to the average size of houses on the road? Not least because all the happy tenants would be made homeless if the house must be converted to a family house.
- I am of course in favour of family homes rather than badly managed HMOs, but from what I have seen of this house, it undoubtedly IS well managed and there is also a need for well managed houses for single adults etc.

Officer comment: The matters raised by the objector and Councillor are dealt with in the report below.

CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of development.
2. Standard and quality of residential accommodation.
3. Impact on neighbouring amenity.
4. Transport considerations.

Principle of Development

HMO accommodation plays an important role in meeting particular housing needs, especially for low-income residents, young people and those needing temporary accommodation, however as set out in Haringey's Development Management DPD 2017 (Para. 3.36) there are broader concerns in respect of losing family units to conversions, with HMOs heavily concentrated in the east of the Borough, with this leading to what it describes as "a significant loss in the availability of family housing for which there is strong need."

As such Policy DM17 set out specific criteria that is required to be met to allow approval of the conversion of a home to an HMO within the area covered by the Article 4 Direction, specifically:

a. The gross original internal floor space of the existing dwelling is greater than 120sqm.

Comment: Policy DM17 sets out a number of criteria that need to be met for such a conversion to be considered acceptable. One of the fundamental requirements is that the original, un-extended gross internal floor area (GIA) of the property must be at least 120 sqm for a conversion to HMO to be considered acceptable. Based on the submitted plans the original un-extended house would have a gross internal floor area (GIA) of approximately 112 sqm and therefore falls significantly short of this requirement. In line with the requirements of Policy DM17 this measurement excludes the existing full width single storey rear extension, built in 1977 (see planning history above), that takes the property existing floor area to approximately 125 sqm.

The property lies within Haringey's Family Housing Protection Zone as such there is a particular identified need for maintaining the boroughs supply of small to medium sized family homes in this area. Also, Policy DM17 specifies that the 120sqm minimum threshold applies to the original un-extended floor area. The reason for this, is that most of the borough's family housing stock is capable of being extended to meet the 120sqm threshold and if extensions are to be considered in meeting the threshold, very little of its stock of small to medium sized family housing would be protected from conversion. Undermining the purpose of the Article 4 direction and Family Housing Protection Zone and creating unbalanced and unsustainable communities.

b. They do not give rise to any significant adverse amenity impact(s) on the surrounding neighbourhood, including cumulative impacts arising from an overconcentration of HMOs within an area

Comment: Haringey's current adopted HMO policy (DM17) does not define what constitutes 'overconcentration'. Haringey's recently published its draft replacement Development Plan proposes introducing a quite stringent definition of overconcentration when it comes to HMOs. The draft policy proposes 5% or more of dwellings in a ward or 10% or more of dwellings in a street with a property licence as an HMO would be considered an overconcentration. While the draft replacement Development Plan is on its first consultation and carries little or no weight in the consideration of planning applications, it does indicate a direction of travel for the Council's approach towards HMO policy and is helpful in filling in a gap in the existing policy.

The current policy takes a local or neighbourhood approach to what might be considered an overconcentration, so it would not be appropriate at this stage in the plan cycle to apply the more strategic ward level definition. However, the 10% limit for an individual street provides a useful measure for what might be considered an overconcentration at a more local level. Particularly as the draft policy is based on upon up-to-date data.

No analysis of the number of existing HMOs in the area has been provided by the applicant. Based on council records there are, within this stretch of Downhills Park Road, between Downhills Way and its Junction with Mannock Road, 36 houses, of which 9 are licenced as some form of HMO, 25% of all houses. This is based on licenced HMO accommodation and doesn't take account of any unlicenced HMOs such as the application property.

If this application is successful, it would push this figure up to approximately 28%. Significantly over the 10% limit that might be considered an overconcentration in the emerging policy described above.

It should be noted that none of the current HMOs mentioned above have ever been granted planning permission to operate as HMOs. Some may have been converted to HMO use prior to the Article 4 Direction restricting PD rights for such changes of use came into place. Others may have been operating for longer than ten years and therefore maybe immune from enforcement action.

Based on the above assessment, the proposal is considered to exacerbate the existing over concentration of HMOs in the area, the communal cumulative impact of which is likely to give rise to significant adverse amenity impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.

c. They are accessible by public transport, cycling and walking

Comment: The site is located within an area with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) 4 which is deemed to be moderate access. There are a number of bus services accessible within 5 to 7 minutes' walk of the site. Turnpike Lane Underground Station is approximately 860 metres or a 9-12 minute walk from the application property.

Sufficient space exists to provide adequate refuse storage to the front of the property. The proposed block plan shows adequate secure bicycle storage to the rear. While not ideal, the provision of bicycle parking to the rear is considered an acceptable compromise given the site's constraints.

d. They provide high quality accommodation that satisfies the relevant policies of the Local Plan, including internal space standards, provision of a satisfactory level of amenity space for occupants, and adequate and convenient refuse storage and collection.

Comment: The proposed extended HMO would have one small communal kitchen/dining room of approximately 15.4 sqm as its sole communal living space. Four of the bedrooms are considered to be of a good size, ranging in area from 15.5 to 21 sqm, with one of them also having an ensuite w.c. The remainder share a communal shower room and a bathroom/w.c. d bathroom. The 5th bedroom has a floor area of just 6.6 sqm, which is considered too small, not meeting the Nationally Described and London Plan minimum standard for a single bedroom of 7.5 sqm. Given the relatively small amount of internal communal space this room will also be the occupant's main living space. All residents will benefit from the use of the rear garden which is welcomed. However, given the inadequate provision of communal space and facilities and the small size of one of the bedrooms/bedsits, the property's proposed use as a 5-bedroom HMO for 5 occupants is not considered to provide an acceptable quality of accommodation.

e. Where non-self-contained, have exclusive use of a kitchen or space within a shared kitchen for each household.

Comment: Haringey licensing standards for HMO's require that one kitchen is shared per three room lettings. Where this has not been provided it is acceptable to install two sets of kitchen facilities (sink/cooker) in the one kitchen as long as there is adequate allowance for multiple occupants to use the space at the same time, and that no bedroom space is more than one floor above or below the kitchen. The kitchen is shown as being able to accommodate two sinks and two cookers and therefore the proposal meets this licensing requirement. However, as the kitchen is the sole communal living space it would not leave much room for dining or other activities.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

In terms of the use, the increase in occupancy from a small dwelling house to a 5-bedroom/ 5-person HMO would result in a materially significant increase in activity. The change from occupancy by a single family or household to an HMO occupied by six independent adults, with their own working patterns, visitors and associated activity is likely to result in materially significant increase in noise and general disturbance, to the likely detriment of adjoining occupiers' residential amenity.

Transport considerations

As stated above, the site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) 4 which is deemed to be moderate access. There are a number of bus services accessible within 5 to 7 minutes' walk of the site. Turnpike Lane Underground Station is approximately 860 metres or a 9-12 minute walk from the application property..

The use of this property as a HMO is not considered to have any greater impact on parking conditions over previous use as a single-family dwelling. An HMO use of this size does not meet the threshold to be designed as 'Car Free', specifically as rented and HMO occupation generates much lower levels of car ownership than the general population. Equally there is also no evidence to show that an HMO would lead to more vehicle ownership and demand for on-street parking greater than that associated with any other large residential flat.

Sufficient space exists to provide adequate refuse storage to the front of the property. The proposed block plan shows adequate secure bicycle storage to the rear. While not ideal, the provision of bicycle parking to the rear is considered an acceptable compromise given the site's constraints.

Recent Appeal Decisions

There have been a number of appeals dismissed by the Secretary of State relating to the refusal of similar applications refused within Haringey. One of the most recent being a decision dated 14 October 2025 (Ref: APP/Y5420/W/25/3370728) dismissing an appeal against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the conversion of a similar sized terraced house to a 6-bedroom HMO at 41 Woodside Gardens, N17. In dismissing the appeal, the Planning Inspector concluded that the development involves the loss of a small to medium-sized family dwelling in a designated protection zone, contrary to the aims of the development plan for the area. It also has the potential to cause harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers through increased noise and disturbance. These harms carry significant weight and are not outweighed by the benefits of the scheme.

Conclusion

The proposed retention of this property as an HMO results in the loss of a small to medium sized family dwelling for which there is an identified need; would result in an overconcentration of HMOs within the locality; and would result in increased noise and general disturbance to the detriment of neighbouring residential amenity. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies DM1 and DM17 of the Local Plan 2017.

All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out above.

CIL APPLICABLE

The increase in internal floor area would not exceed 100 sqm. and therefore, the proposal is not liable for Mayoral or Haringey's CIL charge.

RECOMMENDATION

The application is recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

Refusal Reasons:

The proposed conversion of the single-family dwelling into an HMO would result in an unacceptable loss of family housing for which there is an identified need. The original un-extended floor area of the property also fails to meet the minimum floor space standard set out in the Council's adopted HMO policy. As such the proposal would be contrary to London Plan policy, Local Plan Policy SP2, and DM17 of the adopted Development Management, Development Plan Document (2017).

The proposed conversion of the single-family dwelling into an HMO occupied by five independent adults, with their own working patterns, visitors and associated activity is likely to result in a materially significant increase in noise and general disturbance, which will exacerbate the existing over concentration of HMOs in the area, the communal cumulative impact of which is likely to give rise to significant adverse amenity impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood. As such the proposal would be contrary to London Plan policy D6, Local Plan policy SP2, and policy DM17 of the adopted Development Management, Development Plan Document (2017).

The proposed conversion of the property to a 5-bedroom/5-person HMO, by reason of the inadequate size of one of the bedroom /bed sit rooms, and the lack of internal communal space and facilities, would not provide an acceptable quality of accommodation contrary to Policy DM17 of Haringey's Development Management DPD 2017.