



Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2026/0625
Application Type:	Householder planning permission
Address:	37 Westbury Avenue, Wood Green, London, N22 6BS
Proposal:	Conversion of existing property from a 3 person to a maximum 5 person 4x bedroom house of multiple occupation (HMO).
Case Officer:	Mercy Oruwari
Valid Date:	05/03/2026
Applicant:	Mr. John Cronin
Agent:	Mr George Athanasi

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

1. SITE LOCATION

The subject site is a two storey mid-terraced property located on Westbury Avenue close to Turnpike Lane station. The properties benefit from a small front garden and rear garden. The site is not located within any conservation area.

The property is located within a 'Family Housing Protection zone' as introduced in the 2017 local plan to restrict further residential conversions in areas identified as already having a high concentration of converted properties. It is also pointed out that the application site and this part of the borough is subject to an Article 4 Direction which came into force in November 2013, removing permitted development rights for a change of use from a single family dwelling house (Use Class C3) to a HMO (Use Class C4).

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The application proposes the change of use of this property from a 3 person, 4 bedroom HMO, which was recently confirmed under a Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use following 10 years of use (HGY/2025/3050), to a 5 person, 4 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Class C4).

3. RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

The most recent applications for this site are summarised as follows:

- HGY/2025/3050 – Certificate of lawfulness for existing use of the property as a house in multiple occupation (HMO) (Use Class C4) for 3 occupants. Approved
- ENF/2024/0191 – Unauthorised change of use to an HMO. Pending

4. INTERNAL & STATUTORY CONSULTATION

LBH Transportation Group: No comments.

LBH Private Sector Housing Team (in relation to HMO requirements): No Comment.

LBH Waste: No comments.

5. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups, etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 0

Objecting: 0

Supporting: 0

6. ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of development;
2. Design and appearance;
3. Standard and quality of residential accommodation;
4. Impact on neighbouring amenity;
5. Transport considerations.
6. Waste

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 120m²:

Comment: The original internal un-extended floor space of the property is under 120m² at approximately 116m². It therefore does not meet the requirement in regard to internal floor space. However, the property has been operating as an HMO for over 10 years as confirmed in a recently approved certificate of lawfulness (HGY/2025/3050).

As part of the evidence a HMO licence has been secured from Haringey for the period from October 2024 to October 2029 (Licence Ref: HAR-737667811609). The licence is for a maximum of 5 people living as 3 households. On that basis, the conversion of the property to a 4 bedroom 4-5 person HMO is acceptable in this instance.

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: Several planning appeals against decisions by the LPA to refuse HMO conversions due to concerns of overconcentration have been allowed with Inspectors' citing the lack of a definition within the policy of what constitutes 'overconcentration'.

Haringey's recently published 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 has completed 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 upon up-to-date data.

No analysis of the number of existing HMOs in the area has been provided by the applicant. Based on the Council's own records, of the 224 houses within the street, 21 are currently licenced as HMOs (including the application property), which amounts to 8.9% of the total. This is below the 10% street level threshold discussed above and under Haringey's emerging policy would be considered to not be an overconcentration of HMOs for this road. The proposal would therefore not be considered likely to result in an overconcentration of HMOs within an area.

The proposal here therefore does not affect the availability of family accommodation in the locality. It also needs to be borne in mind that HMOs provide an important source of accommodation as reflected in London and local planning policy. Given the local character, and the site's highly accessible location and proximity to other amenities, this is not considered an over concentration of HMOs for this part of the borough.

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

Comment: The site is located with a public transport accessibility level of PTAL 6B, which is deemed to have excellent access. The site is on a main road with frequent bus services running along it. It is close to numerous bus routes running along the High Road and Turnpike Lane. Turnpike Lane underground station is less than a 3-minute walk from the site. The amenities of the Local Shopping Centre are also close by. Overall, the site is considered to have an excellent level of access.

There is access to a rear garden for communal amenity use. However, no cycle parking for the occupants, which would also need to be secure and sheltered, has been indicated on the plans. The site is a modest sized mid-terrace property, so it would not be practical to manoeuvre such items through the house to store in the rear garden, which is also of quite a modest size.

Given the number of HMO occupiers and modest size of the area at the front, it is also not clear how the provision of both secure cycle storage and bins could be integrated here together.

It would be considered challenging to appropriately accommodate cycle storage at this site. However, the close proximity within a couple of minutes to the vast access to public transport it may be considered that this would not need to be provided. In addition, most occupiers within HMOs are on low incomes and would likely use public transport rather than own cars.

Based on the above assessment, the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of part c of Policy DM17.

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 proposal is for the current approved 4-bedroom/3 person HMO over 2 floors to be increased to a 4-5 person HMO. On the ground floor there are 2 bedrooms, and on the first floor there are 2 further bedrooms. There is a full bathroom accessible to all the occupants on the first floor. There is a 1x shared toilet cubicle on the first floor and 1x toilet on the ground floor. However, the ground floor toilet is outside but very close to the access to the rear garden.

Two of the bedrooms exceed the minimum room size for 1-person occupancy (ground floor 14.5 sqm, first floor 11 sqm) where the kitchen facilities are separate. The other two meet and exceed the requirement for 2-person occupancy (ground floor 15.5 sqm, first floor 20 sqm) where the kitchen facilities are separate.

There is only one shared kitchen located on the ground floor and measures approximately 11m². It would be considered acceptable to meet the resident's needs if the kitchen housed adequate facilities. This would include two sets of facilities such as two sinks, two ovens etc.

Photos and amended plans have been submitted to show how this would be implemented. If the application were to be approved, a condition would be applied for these works to be carried out.

All occupiers would have access to the rear garden through the ground floor kitchen.

With regard to the stacking there may be some transfer of noise from the kitchen to the rooms above, however, in a HMO where there is shared space residents cannot reasonably be protected from noise to the same extent as might be possible in self-contained accommodation.

The frontage of the site has sufficient space for refuse and recycling storage with direct access to the Road. The location of the bins is shown on the plan.

The Councils HMO Licencing Team provides further safeguards to ensure the accommodation is suitable and kept to an acceptable safe standard.

In summary the proposed HMO is considered to provide an acceptable standard of accommodation.

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

Comment: Haringey standards for HMOs require that adequate kitchen be shared amongst three letting rooms. Although this requirement has not been met for this application, for a recently approved case (HGY/2025/3576) the HMO Licensing Team considered that the large ground floor kitchen would be able to accommodate all the occupants subject to an adequate supply of facilities.

The amended proposed ground floor plan shows two sinks, two cookers, two fridge freezers, and adequate cupboard storage for the 4-5 occupants. The proposed kitchen arrangements are therefore considered to comply with the requests by the HMO Licensing Team. If the application were to be approved, a condition would be applied for these works to be carried out.

Design and appearance

DPD Policy DM12 'Housing Design and Quality' states that extensions or alterations to residential buildings, including roof extensions will be required to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, and respect and/ or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, detailing of the original building, including external features such as chimneys, and porches. High quality matching or complementary materials should be used appropriately and sensitively in relation to the context. DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' requires development proposals to relate positively to their locality, while Local Plan (2017) Policy SP11 requires the highest standard of design that respects local context and character and historic significance, which is equally supported by London Plan (2021) Policy D6.

The works here do not propose any alterations by way of external changes or extensions.

Standard and quality of residential accommodation

London Plan Policy D6 requires housing developments to be of high-quality design, providing comfortable and functional layouts, benefiting from sufficient daylight and sunlight, maximising the provision of dual aspect units and providing adequate and easily accessible storage space as well as outdoor amenity space. Table 3.1 sets out the internal minimum space standards for new developments, while Table 3.2 of the London Plan provides qualitative design aspects that should be addressed in housing developments.

The proposed number, size and location of the rooms is acceptable for the size of the property. All 4-5 occupants would have access to adequate bathroom facilities, a shared kitchen, a shared communal room and utility.

The arrangement of the fenestration of the building would allow all bedrooms to benefit from access to windows and light and ventilation. Additionally, all the occupiers would have access to the communal rear garden.

The standard of accommodation overall is considered satisfactory and would comply with HMO licencing requirements.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

London Plan Policy D6 outlines that design must not be detrimental to the amenity of surrounding housing, in specific stating that proposals should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to surrounding housing that is appropriate for its context, while also minimising overshadowing. London Plan Policy D14 requires development proposals to reduce, manage and mitigate noise impacts.

DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' states that development proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for a development's users and neighbours. Specifically, proposals are required to provide appropriate sunlight, daylight and aspects to adjacent buildings and land, and to provide an appropriate amount of privacy to neighbouring properties to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy and detriment to amenity of neighbouring resident.

In terms of use, a 4-5 person HMO is not significant in planning terms. The comings and goings would remain similar to the previous use as a large family house. In planning terms, the LPA do not have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed use here would lead to an over-concentration of HMO development. (This precisely where the LPA wishes to have HMO close to Town centre locations).

Whilst a maximum of 4-5 people, consisting of occupants forming different households may generate additional activity, such as the general coming and going of people and their visitors and the use of the rear outdoor space, the increase in activity from the proposal would likely not impact neighbouring properties to a detrimental level. The noise levels and levels of general disturbance are only likely to increase from increased occupancy by a small degree due to the relatively low number of people occupying the property.

The proposed change of use is therefore not considered likely to result on any materially harmful impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Transport considerations

London Plan Policy T1 requires all development to make the most effective use of land, reflecting its connectivity and accessibility by existing and future public transport, walking and cycling routes, and to ensure that any impacts on London's transport networks and supporting infrastructure are mitigated. Policies T4, T5 and T6 set out key principles for the assessment of development impacts on the highway network in terms of trip generation, parking demand and cycling provision.

Local Plan Policy SP7 'Transport' states that the Council aims to tackle climate change, improve local place shaping and public realm, and environmental and transport quality and safety by promoting public transport, walking and cycling and seeking to locate major trip generating developments in locations with good access to public transport. This is supported by DPD Policy DM31 'Sustainable Transport'.

The Council's Transportation Team have raised no objection to this application. As such the use of this property as an HMO is not considered to have any greater impact on parking conditions over and above the existing extant use of the property. The sites' excellent PTAL rating, extremely close proximity to public transport, and the provision of refuse storage, as well as amenity space for residents also adds to the minimal increased impact from this proposal. In addition, the proposal is in line with development plan policy to discourage private vehicle use in favour of more sustainable modes of transport.

An HMO use of this size does not meet the threshold to be designated 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 house.

Based on TfL's current assessment, the site has above excellent public transport accessibility level (PTAL of 6B). It is close to numerous bus routes and is close to a prime underground station. The amenities of the Local shopping are also close by.

It is considered, given the scale of the development, the intended level of occupancy and the availability of public transport in the area, the proposal is not considered to result in harm to the transport and highways network or result in on-street parking stress.

Waste Management

DM DPD Policy DM4 requires proposals to sustainably manage waste that arises from development during the design, construction, and occupation phases. All proposals should make on-site provision for general waste, the separation of recyclable materials and organic material. Adequate internal and external storage space should be provided to manage the volume of waste arising from the site. Accessible and safe access to on-site storage facilities both for occupiers and collection operatives should be supplied.

The proposal provides details of the refuse and recycling storage arrangements in the front garden in the amended submitted plan. No objection has been raised by the council's waste team. However, it is considered that the number of bins provided is sufficient to satisfy HMO Licence. There is also sufficient space to the front to accommodate refuse facilities without harming the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

The proposed HMO is considered acceptable and will provide an acceptable layout and standard of accommodation for future occupiers, with no unacceptable impact on the living conditions/ without generating any significant amenity impacts on the local neighbourhood or on the highway network in relation to parking.

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

7. CIL APPLICABLE

N/A.

8. RECOMMENDATION

The application is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- 1 Within 3 months of the date of this permission, the internal works to the ground floor kitchen, as shown on the approved plans, shall be fully carried out and completed to provide the level of facilities required to accommodate five occupants, unless an alternative timeframe has first been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The kitchen shall thereafter be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the HMO use.

Reason: To ensure the property provides an adequate standard of accommodation for all occupants in accordance with Policy DM17 of the Development Management DPD (2017) and to secure the timely delivery of essential facilities necessary for the authorised level of occupation.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed below, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Approved drawings list:

- 2532A.02A3 Proposed Ground & First Floor Plans REVISED
- 2532A.01A- Existing Site Plan, Ground and First Floor Plans

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 The House of Multiple Occupation hereby approved must be occupied by no more than 5 persons at any time.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of nearby residential occupiers consistent with Policy D14 of the London Plan 2021 and Policies DM1 and DM23 of The Development

Management DPD 2017.