

MC/25/1453

Date Received: 17 July 2025

Location: 3 Kingswood Road, Gillingham, Medway ME7 1DZ

Proposal: Change of use from dwelling house (Class C3) to an 8-bedroom house of multiple occupation (Class C4) with loft conversion, single storey rear extension.

Applicant Rossi Marinelli

Agent Homz UK
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Ward: Gillingham South

Case Officer: Sam Pilbeam

Contact Number: 01634 331700

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on the 17 December 2025.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 All materials used externally shall match those set out in the drawing numbers DKM/8443/10 REV 05 (Proposed Mixed Plans) and DKM/8443/12 REV 02 (Proposed Block Plan) received 17 July 2025.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 3 All materials used externally shall match those of the existing building.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 4 The house of multiple occupation hereby approved shall be occupied by a maximum of eight people.

Reason: To regulate and control the amount of occupants of the property in the interests of the amenities of neighbouring properties and of occupants of

the site itself which has limited communal facilities, in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 5 Prior to the commencement of development details of cycle parking facilities to be provided on site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved cycle facilities shall be provided on site prior to first occupation of the property as a house in multiple occupation and shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability and to encourage cycle use with regard to Policy T4 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 6 Prior to the first occupation of the property as a eight bedroom Sui Generis HMO the refuse facilities as shown on approved drawing number DKM/8443/10 rev 02 shall be provided on site and thereafter retained.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability with regard to Policy T4 and BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 7 Prior to first use of the property as a Sui Generis eight bedroom HMO herein approved, a Parking Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Parking Management Plan shall contain details of how the parking is to be managed for residents and their visitors, including the restriction of resident parking permits to a maximum of one per household. The Parking Management Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation as a Sui Generis HMO and shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability and residential amenity in accordance with Policy T13 and BNE2 of the Medway Local plan 2003.

The reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing, Use Class C3, property into an eight-bedroom Sui Generis Use houses of multiple occupation (HMO).

The proposal consists of numerous external alterations, including the demolition of the existing conservatory at ground floor level and construction of a single storey rear extension measuring approx. 7m in depth and 4.6m in length; enlargement of the existing side extensions footprint and altering of the roof-form from a lean-to style design to a flat roof; alongside alterations to the roof pitch and design to form space for the installation of a rear dormer and to rooflights to the front.

Internally, the proposal would comprise of a utility and plant room at the lower ground floor; four ensuite bedrooms and a kitchen/diner at ground floor level; three ensuite

bedrooms at first-floor level; and an ensuite bedroom within the roof-space. To the rear the site supports a rear garden measuring approx. 11m in depth.

Relevant Planning History

MC/25/0372

Application for a Lawful Development Certificate (proposed) for the demolition of part of the rear conservatory and the building of a rear single storey extension, loft conversion with hip to gable, a rear dormer and rooflight to the front.
Decision: Approval
Decided: 17 April 2025

Representations

The application has been advertised on site, and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Three letters of objection have been received on the following grounds:

- Works have started.
- Increased levels of noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour.
- Poor level of shared facilities.
- Refuse storage locations and potential for increased fly-tipping.
- Increased demand for off-street parking.
- Potential conflicts safeguarding with adjacent care homes.
- Proliferation of HMOs within the area.

Kent Police commented on the application requesting they are consulted as Designing out Crime Officers (DOCO's) to address CPTED and incorporate Secured by Design (SBD) as appropriate.

Cllr Louwella Prenter objects to the application on the following grounds:

- Overdevelopment.
- Existing parking issues within the site.
- No refuse storage details and potential for fly-tipping.
- Potential for increased anti-social behaviour.
- Loss of a family home.

Post deferral of the application after being taken to the 22 October Committee meeting, further objections were received, including:

MP Naushabah Khan on the grounds:

- Increased levels of parking pressures.
- Lack of refuse storage and potential for fly-tipping.
- Cumulative impact of existing HMOs, flats and guest house eroding the character of the area.

Petition signed by **fifty-five individuals** objecting on the grounds:

- Overdevelopment.
- HMO use is not in-keeping with the character of the street-scene.
- Increased parking pressures.
- Erosion of community well-being.
- Straining local services.
- Proliferation of HMOs within the area undermines the sense of community-cohesion.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) and are generally considered to conform. Where non-conformity exists, this is addressed in the Planning Appraisal section below.

The Emerging Local Plan has been agreed by Full Council for Reg 19 publication, consultation and, following any changes required as a result of the consultation exercise, submission to the Inspectorate for examination. The policies within this version of the emerging plan have weight in the determination of planning (and associated) applications. However, due to the nature of this proposal, the stage of the emerging Local Plan, the existence of relevant adopted Policies in the Medway Local Plan (2003) and guidance in the NPPF it is considered that the proposal falls to be mainly considered with regard to the adopted policies and guidance in the NPPF.

Planning Appraisal

Principle

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF seeks to pursue sustainable development, in a positive and proactive manner through paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Stating that applications should be considered in favour for a presumption in favour of sustainable development, unless the Policy provides a clear reason for refusal, or that any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Furthermore, paragraph 60 of the NPPF seeks to boost the supply of housing by bringing forward a variety of land to meet specific housing requirements.

Such a direction supported by the NPPF is also echoed by Policy S1 of the Local Plan: promoting the best use of development opportunities within urban areas and the re-development and investment within said locations, in particular underused areas in Gillingham.

Policy H7 of the Local Plan supports permitting HMO's subject to the following criteria:

- (i) the property is in an area with a predominantly mixed-use or commercial character.
- (ii) and the property is located where increased traffic and activity would not be detrimental to local amenity; and
- (iii) either the property is detached, and the proposal would not adversely affect the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.
- (iv) or where the property is not detached, relevant nearby or adjoining properties are in multiple occupation or a non-residential use; and
- (v) for changes of use, the property is too large to reasonably expect its occupation by a single household.

The immediate area and locality are predominantly formed of single household occupancy, albeit that it is recognised the site is located in close proximity to Gillingham High Street and there are some sporadic alternative uses such as small HMOs, subdivided flats, and local shops within the area.

While it is recognised that there are mixed-use elements within the vicinity, the immediate location of the site would not be characterised as 'predominantly mixed-use or commercial character'.

Notwithstanding that, as of the 4 April 2015 the effects of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015: Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L, dwellinghouses – falling under Use Class C3 – are permitted to be converted into small HMOs supporting living accommodation for up to six people or less.

The principle of the conversion of the property to an HMO is accepted by virtue of the above permitted development order and, therefore, criteria (i) above can have only very limited weight.

Policy T8 of the emerging Local Plan seeks to avoid detrimental clusters of HMOs and to ensure that they provide a suitable quality of accommodation. The supporting text to the policy acknowledges that HMOs have a role to play in sustainable and inclusive communities providing accommodation for single people on low incomes and can also be accommodation of choice for young professionals moving to an area. The supporting text does though acknowledge harm where there are high concentrations of HMOs and/or poor management of properties. Accordingly, Policy T8 supports planning applications for HMOs where they:

- Do not adversely affect the character and amenity of the area.
- Do not contribute to an over provision of HMOs in an area.
- Do not lead to the loss of suitable units for family accommodation, particularly in areas of high concentration of HMOs.
- Do not generate excessive parking demands.
- Provide a suitable level of amenity complying with national internal space standards and at least one reception room and kitchen or equivalent space.
- Make provision for waste and cycles.

- Do not adversely affect health of residents – new and existing.

Considering the remaining criteria of Policy H7 of the Local Plan and Policy T8 of the emerging plan, there is a limited number of registered HMOs within 200m of the site and there appears to be a limited number of dwellings subdivided into flats. Consequently, there is no concern with respect to the potential clustering of such uses, proliferation and the associated detrimental impacts upon adjoining residential amenity.

Whilst Policy H7 doesn't state what is considered too large for single household occupation, elsewhere in the Local Plan it states that "the Council considers that dwellings of less than 120sqm gross floor area in predominantly residential areas should be retained for families and single households." The size of the existing property itself is large, measuring 137m² internally, therewith potentially allowing for its subdivision without negative impacts upon the amenities of future occupants or resulting in the loss of a dwelling that would more broadly lend itself towards single family dwellings.

Design

Both the NPPF and Local Plan stress an emphasis of good design and achieving high quality buildings. Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan states that the design of development should be appropriate in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the built and natural environment by amongst other matters being satisfactory in terms of scale, mass, proportion, details, and materials.

Moreover, paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that developments should contribute to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, supported by paragraph 131 which adds that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

The application site is located within the urban area of Gillingham, sited approx. 180m due southwest of Gillingham Station. The property itself forms a corner plot at the junction between Kingswood Road and Jeffery Street, bound on all sides by residential properties generally comprising of two storey terraced dwellings formed of a range of designs and details, including bays to the front, coining, lintels, and a mixed material finishing.

The immediate area as a whole forms a tightly knit urban grain, predominantly in residential use, with more commercial uses at ground-floor level located to the west at Gillingham High Street.

The dwelling itself reflects the character of the area, albeit is situated within a slightly larger plot by virtue of its corner plot location, supporting a two-storey inset flank extension and lean-to style mono-pitched extension that abuts the adjacent footpath.

The proposed alterations consist of the demolition of the lean-to and conservatory, and the construction of a single-storey flat roof extension to the side and rear. Effectively atop the existing side extensions footprint but with an added projection into the rear garden.

There are also numerous alterations to the roof-form, including a hip to gable and insertion of a rear dormer.

The bulk and massing of the rear extensions when viewed from the street scene would be reduced given the alteration from a lean-to style roof to a flat roof. The proposed footprint would not appear cramped or contrived and fits well within the plot abutting the boundary treatment similarly to the existing building. No objections are, therefore, raised in this regard.

The proposed roof alterations are again relatively minimal the proposed hip to gable conversion, while increasing the overall bulk of the roof, would appear in keeping with that of the street scene and remains proportional to the dwelling.

No objections are, therefore, raised in relation to Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Amenity

There are two main amenity considerations, firstly the impact of the proposed dwelling on neighbours and secondly the living conditions which would be created for potential occupants of the development itself. Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 135f of the NPPF relates to the protection of these amenities.

In addition to this, as discussed within the “Principal” section of this report, due to the application seeking the conversion of the existing Use Class C3 dwellinghouse into an eight person HMO in Use Class C4 Use Policy H7 of the Local Plan and T8 of the emerging plan are relevant.

Neighbouring Residential Amenity

The proposed external alterations include the demolition of the existing side lean-to extension and conservatory, alongside a hip to gable extension to the roof and installation of a rear dormer.

By virtue of the properties sitting, relative to the orientation of the sun and adjacent dwellings it is not considered that these alterations would result in loss of outlook, sunlight; or encroach onto adjoining residential habitable spaces.

The rear dormer would provide views into rear neighbouring gardens but no more than exist by virtue of the existing first floor windows or already exist from other neighbouring 2 storey properties.

The proposal seeks to convert the property into an eight-bedroom HMO. As such, there is a potential for increased comings and goings and likelihood of noise and disturbance. However, as outlined in the principal section of this report, the applicants permitted development rights grant them the ability to convert the dwelling into an HMO without the need for planning permission. Consequently, affording a clearly demonstrable fallback position.

The existing property is relatively large supporting three double bedrooms, that when assessed against the National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG) standards could be occupied by a total of six adults with consequent comings and goings.

When considering the proposal seeks to increase the number of occupants by a further two residents and the limited number of HMOs within 200m of the site, it is not considered that such a limited increase in occupants would cause such a demonstrable increased harm through disturbance to justify a refusal of planning consent. Such a view is substantiated by recent appeal decisions against similar HMOs elsewhere in the borough.

Future Occupants

The proposed bedrooms have been considered against the Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard 2015 with the requirement for the provision of a single bedroom to measure a minimum of 2.15m in width and support a floor area of 7.5m². All of the proposed bedrooms would exceed this requirement and, in some cases, would significantly exceed the space standards set out by the NPPG.

All bedrooms would be served with an adequate degree of natural light and afforded suitable outlook.

The remaining communal space comprises of a 27.75m² kitchen, dining area and small lower-ground floor utility room, which would be shared amongst a total of eight individuals. The kitchen area is depicted more-so as a general functional space for cooking and washing of clothes, with a table for dining space and general leisure. In addition, there is a utility area in the lower ground floor.

Moreover, the oversized bedrooms, relative to the requirements set out by the NPPG standards, grant occupants private leisure space and secure sufficient room for household recreation including the installation of a television, and desk for a computer, reading and the alike. Reducing an overreliance upon the main communal area for these daily activities.

In order to ensure that the internal amenity standards of future occupants are not compromised, or that the dwelling becomes overly camped, a condition requiring that the occupancy of the property does not exceed more than a total of eight residents at any one time is recommended.

Subject to this condition, no objections would, therefore, be raised in regard to Policies BNE2 and H7 of the Local Plan, Policy T8 of the emerging plan and paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking

Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to the impact of new development on the highway network. Policy T13 of the Local Plan is related to parking standards. Both policies H7 of the Local Plan and T8 of the emerging plan include criteria in relation to impact on parking and amenity. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF seeks development located in

sustainable locations, limiting the need to travel and offering choice of transport modes to reduce congestion and emission and improve air quality and public health.

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there is an unacceptable impact on highways safety.

While it is understood that the application site would not be able to meet its parking need off-street, nor does the current use a single occupancy dwellinghouse.

Likewise, the Medway Residential Parking Standards state: "Reductions of the standard will be considered if the development is within an urban area that has good links to sustainable transport and where day-to-day facilities are within easy walking distance".

Given the property falls within the urban area of Gillingham, with amenities such as shops, green space, public transport links and schools/colleges within approx. 10 – 15-minute walking distance, and the close proximity of Gillingham High Street, the site is considered to meet these parameters.

While it is acknowledged that there are some existing pressures on car parking within the area, this is mitigated through the requirement of parking permits while the site is in a highly sustainable location and the nature of the HMO occupancy more typically presents itself to occupants who do not own cars.

Notwithstanding the above, in order to encourage the likelihood of future occupants to choose alternative modes of transport to the private car, two conditions are recommended to require the provision and details of cycle storage within the rear garden; and a car parking management plan detailing how future occupants of the HMO will be deterred from obtaining a parking permit.

Consequently, in light of the above and subject to the recommended conditions, no objections would be raised in regard to Policies H7, T1 and T13 of the Local Plan, T8 of the emerging Plan or paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

As of 2 April 2024, all sites were subject to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as per the conditions of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

Notwithstanding, de minimis exemptions, whereby BNG does not need to be provided, are set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, confirming within subsection 4:

- “(1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which meets the first and second conditions.
- (2) The first condition is that the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat.
- (3) The second condition is that the development impacts:
 - (a) less than 25 square meters of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value

greater than zero; and
(b) less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.”

In this instance both of the above conditions set out by the Act are considered of relevance, therefore, the application does not meet the threshold for the requirement of a BNG statement.

Bird Mitigation

As the application site is within 6km of the North Kent Marshes SPA/Ramsar Sites, the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination, on the coastal North Kent Special Protection Areas (SPAs)/Ramsar sites from recreational disturbance on the over-wintering bird interest. Natural England has advised that an appropriate tariff of £337.49 per dwelling (excluding legal and monitoring officer's costs, which separately total £550) should be collected to fund strategic measures across the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries. This tariff should be collected for new dwellings, either as new builds or conversions (which includes HMOs and student accommodation).

These strategic SAMMS mitigation measures are being delivered through Bird Wise North Kent, which is the brand name of the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Scheme (SAMMS) Board, and the mitigation measures have been informed by the Category A measures identified in the Thames, Medway & Swale Estuaries Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMM) produced by Footprint Ecology in July 2014. Further information regarding the work being undertaken is available at The Bird Wise website which can be found at <https://northkent.birdwise.org.uk/about/>.

The applicant has submitted a SAMMS Mitigation Contribution Agreement and payment and, therefore, no objection is, therefore, raised under Policies S6 and BNE35 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 194 and 195 of the NPPF.

A decision from the Court of Justice of the European Union detailed that mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a full 'appropriate assessment' is needed under the Habitats Directive. Given the need for the application to contribute to the North Kent SAMMS, there is a need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out as part of this application. This is included as a separate assessment form.

Deferral Update

This application was taken to the Planning Committee held on the 22 October 2025, however, was deferred by members on the basis there was insufficient evidence and information insofar as to allow the Committee to determine the existing intensity of HMOs within a 500-metre radius of the application site and therewith: ascertain an informed view on the potential for the proliferation of HMO uses and likely resultant cumulative harm in allowing further HMOs within the locality.

Since the meeting, the Council have commissioned further investigations in the form of a Review and Evidence Paper (produced by DHA, November 2025) tracking

existing HMOs across each Ward in Medway; formulating a predictive model identifying unlicensed HMOs; and analysis of the potential cumulative impacts of HMOs.

The pursuant case falls within the threshold of Gillingham South. The supporting report evidence that of a total of 7163 dwellings within the Ward, 205 comprise of HMOs; or when expressed as a percentage, the total number of HMOs in Gillingham South equates to 2.8% of the housing stock.

On a broad level, looking at the impacts of the proposed HMO against the proportion of HMOs within the Ward: it is not viewed that the proposed change of use would result in an unacceptable increase against the overall intensity of HMOs within Gillingham South. In particular when considering the applicants existing fallback position, allowing them to convert the existing property into a six-bedroom HMO under Class L of the GDPO.

Rather, when assessing the existing balance of HMOs within the Ward and taking into accounts the Ward's urban central location; connectivity to a range of amenities and services; opportunities for work and higher education; alongside wider public services, the existing quantum of HMOs would appear proportionate.

Notwithstanding, at a local level, there are numerous HMOs located upon Kingswood Road and one along Jeffery Street. This is one of the more densely clustered areas of HMO occupancy within the northeast of the Ward, in addition to Balmoral Road; with the remaining HMOs being more evenly distributed throughout the surrounding streets. Equating to a total of 62 HMOs within a 500-metre radius of the application site.

Whilst this is understood, that the application site forms part of an existing cluster of HMOs it is vital to look at the specific site situations opposed to purely operating a numerical exercise.

Against this backdrop, the application site differs from the surrounding context, given its corner plot location and subsequently oversized footprint relative to its surrounding dwellings. Correlatively, the larger footprint allows for a more suitable conversion of the property into a larger HMO; the corner plot location also benefits the application site insofar as any associated increased levels of activities would not propagate into numerous residential properties. More-so, isolating the HMO from other single occupancy residential uses.

With the site's context in mind, it is not viewed that the generally anticipated localised impacts against surrounding residents would be further eroded by the proposed change of use. Again, this view is taken with particular regard to the applicants demonstrable fallback position, allowing them to convert the property into a six-bedroom HMO without planning permission; the proposed eight-bedroom unit is not considered to result in levels of anti-social activities or frequency of comings and goings that would likely exceed that of the applicants permitted development rights.

Other residential impacts, including refuse storage and pressures upon on-street parking will be alleviated by appropriately worded planning conditions ensuring mitigation measures are implemented accordingly and prior to first occupation.

Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation for Approval

The property can be converted to a small-scale HMO comprising up to 6 occupants without the need for any planning permission. There is no over concentration of HMOs in the area and the proposal has been designed to provide a good level of amenity for prospective occupiers without harming the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers. While car parking is an issue in the area, due to the general character of occupiers of HMO's not having cars, the sustainable location of the property and the recommended conditions it is considered that pressure on car parking will be limited and acceptable.

The proposal complies with the provisions set out in paragraphs 11, 60, 115, 116, 131, 135, 135(f), 194 and 195 of the NPPF, Policies BNE1, BNE2, BNE35, H7, S1, S6, T1 and T13 of the Local Plan and Policy T8 of the emerging Plan. The application is, therefore, recommended for approval.

The application would normally be determined under delegated powers but is being referred to Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Louwella Prenter.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://publicaccess1.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>