

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 142203/LE/2025
Date registered valid: 19 February 2025
Proposal: Use of property as a house of multiple occupation (Use Class C4)
Address: 4 St Brendan's Road, Manchester, M20 3GH
Ward(s): Old Moat Ward

Applicant: Mr Timothy Johnson T.A & R Johnson
Agent (if any):
Case officer: Robert Tyrer
Tel: 0161 234 4068
Email: robert.tyrer@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Grant
Date of recommendation: 11 April 2025

Application details

Type of application: Certificate Lawful Development Existing

Development type: Certificates of lawfulness

Date of site visit: Not Required

Standard consultations:

No consultations have been printed and sent.

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 27 February 2025 Expired: 20 March 2025

Site notice

No site notice has been produced

Press advert

No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building and area

4 St Brendan's Road is a four-bedroom mid-terrace house situated in the Withington Ward of Manchester. The property features small, enclosed front and rear gardens, offering private amenity space.

Withington is located in the southern part of Manchester. It is a diverse community with a significant student population, young professionals, and graduates. The ward features several green spaces, including Fletcher Moss Park and Chorlton Water Park.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of development

The applicant is seeking a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use (CLEU) for use of the property as a house in multiple occupation (Use Class C4).

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – Notification letters were sent to nearby residential properties (see appendix 1 for the list of properties).

Local residents/public opinion – No objections, comments or representations in support of the application have been received.

Legislative Issues

Sections 191 and 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provide for anyone (not just a person with a legal interest in the land) to apply to the local planning authority (LPA) for a lawful development certificate (LDC). A certificate is a statutory document certifying:

- (1) in the case of an application under section 191, the lawfulness, for planning purposes, of existing operations on, or use of land, or some activity being carried out in breach of a planning condition; or
- (2) in the case of an application under section 192, the lawfulness of proposed operations on, or use of land.

The onus of proof in regard to (1) is firmly on the applicant and the issue of a certificate will depend on the on factual evidence provided about the history and planning status of the building or other land and the interpretation of any relevant planning law or judicial authority. The relevant test of the evidence in this matter is "the balance of probability" and the applicants own evidence does not need to be corroborated by independent evidence. If the LPA have no evidence to contradict the applicant's version of events or make them less than probable, there is no good reason to refuse the issue of a certificate.

In regard to (2), this provides that, if the LPA are supplied with information satisfying them that the use or operations described in the application would be lawful, if instituted or begun at the time of the application, they shall issue a certificate to that effect; and, in any other case, they shall refuse the application.

In short, the purpose section 192 is to enable any person who wishes to find out whether any proposed use or operations would be lawful to apply to the LPA for that purpose.

The application needs to describe the proposal with sufficient clarity and precision to enable the LPA to understand (from a written description and plans) exactly what is involved in the proposal; and to submit whatever supporting information or legal submission that are to be relied upon in order to satisfy the LPA that a certificate should be granted for the proposal.

In making their decision on an application under section 192, the LPA ask themselves the hypothetical question - "If this proposed change of use had already occurred, or if this proposed operation had commenced, on the application date, would it have been lawful for planning purposes?" In doing so, the LPA will not only consider whether the proposal would involve "development" requiring an application for planning permission, but whether it would involve a breach of any existing condition or limitation imposed on a grant of planning permission which has been acted upon, and which therefore constrains what can be done on the land. The LPA will not make a proposal fit a scenario; the only question is whether the proposal made by the applicant is lawful at the time of submission.

The Application

This application is pursued under subsection (1) of section 191 which provides for an application to determine whether a specified existing use, operation, or failure to comply with a planning condition or limitation, which has already been carried out on land is lawful for planning purposes.

In a case of this type, the onus is on the applicant to substantiate his or her case, on the balance of probability. The applicant needs to demonstrate that the use of property as a House in Multiple Occupation (Sui Generis) commenced more than ten years prior to the date of the application (i.e. by 19th February 2015) and continued without a significant break for ten years.

Class C4 is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended, as “Use of a dwellinghouse by not more than six residents as a “house in multiple occupation”.” This latter term is as defined in S.254 of the Housing Act 2004.

The application form states that from the 1st November 1989 the property became an HMO use.

The Planning Practice Guidance points to the need for evidence to be sufficiently precise and unambiguous to justify the grant of a certificate on the balance of probability.

The relevant test, established by the court in *Thrasivoulou v SSE* [1984], is the balance of probabilities – whether something is more likely than not.

The information provided shows that for the 10 years there has been consistently three to four tenants within the property, the applicant provided a mixture of documentation from tenancy agreements (from 2013/14 to 2025/26), tenancy deposit protection certificates, and a rental ledger.

In addition, the applicant has provided a statutory declaration to confirm the details of the HMO.

The applicant does not have to “demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt”, as that is the standard of proof required for criminal cases and would be wrong test to apply.

Therefore, on balance of probability and without any evidence to the contrary the properties have been in use as a house in multiple occupation and the certificate should be granted.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Grant

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) From the evidence available, and with reference to the relevant planning legislation, Manchester City Council is satisfied that the use is lawful by reason of the said use having been in existence for a period of 10 years up to the date of this application.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

6 St Brendan's Road, Manchester, M20 3GH
2 St Brendan's Road, Manchester, M20 3GH
1 St Brendan's Road, Manchester, M20 3GH
65 Old Moat Lane, Manchester, M20 3EJ

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA