MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	143991/LE/2025
Date registered valid:	29 September 2025
Proposal:	Use of premises as a House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4).
Address:	174 Acomb Street, Manchester, M14 4DZ
Ward(s):	Moss Side Ward
Applicant:	Sadie Malim Wakmoor (Assets) Ltd
Agent (if any):	Mr Thomas Humphreys Iceni Projects Ltd
Case officer:	Robert Tyrer Tel: 0161 234 4068 Email: robert.tyrer@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	**Grant**
Date of recommendation:	14 November 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: 8 October 2025 Expired: 29 October 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 and Area

The application relates to a two storey mid terrace property on 174 Acomb Street in close proximity to Rusholme District Centre, Oxford Road and Whitworth Park.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of development

Certificates of lawfulness for use of the property as a small House in Multiple Occupation (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.

Issues

Planning History - There have been one previous planning applications at this address;

138040/LE/2023 – A lawful development certificate application was refused on 7 August 2023 for the use of the property as a small House in Multiple Occupation (Class C4).

The application was refused for the following reason:

> *"The applicant has failed to demonstrate that number 174 Acomb Street, Manchester, M14 4DZhas been occupied as a small scale house in multiple occupation Class C4 of the schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) for a continual 10 year period up to the date of the application."*

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 then 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 small House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) commenced more than ten years prior to the date of the application (i.e. by 17 September 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 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 Thrasyvoulou v SSE [1984], is the balance of probabilities – whether something is more likely than not.

Assessment of Evidence

The application states that the property has been in continuous use as a small House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Use Class C4) since 1 September 2010. This is supported by a statement of truth signed by the applicant, planning statement, a copy of the premises license covering the period 2016 to 2021, a floor plan of the property, and tenancy agreements covering the period from 2010 to 2025 (Image 1), These documents show that most tenancies housed between four to six occupants, over the last 10 years.

The floor plan submitted with the application shows that the dwellinghouse contains a total of six bedrooms: three on the second floor, three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor, and a bathroom, lounge, dining room and kitchen on the ground floor.

The applicant has provided a signed statement of truth, dated 10 September 2025, confirming that they purchased the property in July 2021. They state that the property has been a HMO since 2015.

Image 1 provides a summary of the tenancy agreements submitted in support of the application, as outlined in the accompanying planning statement.

Tenants	AST Start Date	AST End Date
Four tenants	September 2010	September 2011
Four tenants	September 2011	September 2012
Four tenants	December 2012	June 2013
Three tenants	September 2013	September 2014
Two tenants	September 2014	March 2015
Six tenants	September 2015	August 2016
Six tenants	September 2016	August 2017
Four tenants	September 2017	August 2018
Six tenants	September 2018	August 2019
Six tenants	September 2019	August 2020
Six tenants	August 2020	August 2021
Six tenants	September 2021	August 2022
Five tenants	August 2022	August 2023
Six tenants	August 2023	June 2024
Six tenants	September 2024	August 2025

Image 1 Summary of the tenancy agreements submitted in support of the application, as outlined in the accompanying planning statement. The red box added by case officer to highlight the tenancy agreements within 10 years.

The previous ten years of tenancy agreements shows that the property in use as HMO where by four to six tenants lived at the address.

Planning Practice Guidance emphasizes that evidence must be sufficiently precise and unambiguous to justify the grant of a certificate on the balance of probability.

There is no evidence to contradict the applicant's version of events or to render them less than probable. Accordingly, 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 polices 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

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

23 Kippax Street, Manchester, M14 4EX
Flat 1, 176 Acomb Street, Hulme, Manchester, M14 4DZ
Flat 2, 176 Acomb Street, Hulme, Manchester, M14 4DZ
176 Acomb Street, Hulme, Manchester, M14 4DZ
21 Kippax Street, Manchester, M14 4EX
172 Acomb Street, Hulme, Manchester, M14 4DZ
179 Acomb Street, Hulme, Manchester, M14 4DY
177 Acomb Street, Hulme, Manchester, M14 4DY
175 Acomb Street, Hulme, Manchester, M14 4DY
19 Kippax Street, Manchester, M14 4EX

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Flood Zones Type 2 (low to medium risk) -
Flood Zones Type 2 (low to medium risk) -
Flood Zone Plus Climate Change -
Flood Zone Plus Climate Change -
Regulation 7 Direction (Control Advert) - Control Of To Let Boards (Moss Side)
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA