

Planning Application: APP/25/00979
7-9 London Road, Widley - Proposed Change of Use to HMO

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write [REDACTED] to formally object to Planning Application **APP/25/00979**. The proposal raises substantial concerns regarding the suitability of the accommodation for families, traffic and pedestrian safety, transparency about previous use, lack of a clear management plan, and significant shortcomings in the Transport Statement.

1. Clarification Required on Suitability for Families

The application states that the development is intended for families; however, the proposed accommodation consists mainly of very small 1-bed and 2-bed studio-style units with limited internal space and shared facilities. It is unclear how these units could safely or appropriately meet the needs of families with children, even on a temporary basis.

The layout provides no private kitchen facilities, minimal bathroom provision, and relies on communal areas shared with unrelated adults. Families require self-contained, private, and sufficiently sized accommodation to support daily routines and safeguard children. As designed, the proposal does not appear to meet these essential standards.

We therefore ask the Council to clarify how this accommodation is considered suitable for family use and how safeguarding concerns arising from shared facilities will be addressed.

2. Noise and Disturbance

A development of this scale, particularly one with shared facilities and potentially high turnover of residents, is likely to generate increased noise and disturbance. No noise mitigation measures, supervision arrangements, or behaviour management plans have been provided, leaving both residents and neighbours at risk of ongoing disruption.

3. Parking Pressure and Traffic Impact

Only four parking spaces are proposed, two of which are disabled bays. No parking is allocated for staff, visitors, support workers, or residents who depend on private transport. Despite the applicant's assurances, no parking stress survey or evidence-based assessment has been supplied.

Given that parking restrictions end just several metres from the junction, overspill parking onto Hillside Avenue is extremely likely, adding pressure to an already constrained residential street.

4. Lack of a Clear Management Plan

The application offers no meaningful information on how the site will be managed. Critical questions remain unanswered, including staffing levels, safeguarding procedures, behaviour expectations, and how complaints or concerns will be addressed. Without a robust management plan, the risks to both residents and the community cannot be properly evaluated.

5. Lack of Transparency Regarding Previous Use

██████████ aware that the property was used to house individuals while operating as a private B&B, but the scale, duration, and nature of these placements were not disclosed. A Freedom of Information request has been submitted to determine how the building was previously used. The need for an FOI highlight concerns about transparency and raises questions about how the development would be managed if approved.

6. Unclear Placement Criteria and ‘Local Connection’

The application refers to a “local connection” requirement but does not define how this will be assessed or applied. It remains unclear whether households from outside the borough could be placed here or how suitability and support needs will be evaluated.

7. Undefined Nature of ‘Temporary’ Accommodation

The proposal provides no information on the maximum length of stay, expected turnover of residents, or how transitions will be managed. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to understand the long-term impact on both occupants and the wider community.

8. Impact of Building Works on Neighbours

No details have been provided regarding construction timelines, contractor access, noise and dust mitigation, or how disruption to neighbouring homes will be minimised. This information is essential for understanding the short-term impact of the proposal.

9. Road Safety Concerns

The site occupies a challenging corner where visibility is limited, gradients affect manoeuvring, and pedestrian crossing points are restricted. Increased vehicle movements, deliveries, taxis, and overspill parking will heighten these existing hazards. No Road Safety Audit or visibility assessment has been submitted despite the intention to accommodate families and potentially vulnerable individuals.

10. Fundamental Issues with the Transport Statement

The Transport Statement contains several major omissions and inconsistencies, including:

- treating Hillside Avenue as suitable for delivery stopping despite its narrow layout.
- failing to assess pedestrian and vehicle conflicts at the rear access.
- proposing refuse collection arrangements without any swept path analysis.
- assuming low car ownership without evidence.
- using inappropriate TRICS comparisons with a much larger hotel.
- failing to account for cumulative trips from visitors, support workers, health appointments, and taxis.

These shortcomings undermine confidence in the conclusions presented.

11. Poor Communication and Lack of Meaningful Consultation

disappointed to discover this application through social media rather than through direct communication or formal engagement. For a proposal with potentially significant impact on a long-established residential area, this is not acceptable.

Best practice in planning, reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework and RTP1 guidance, emphasises early, transparent, and meaningful engagement. Learning of the application informally has undermined confidence in the process and highlights the need for improved communication when developments of this nature are proposed.

To summarise, the proposal does not provide safe or suitable accommodation for families, raises serious safeguarding and highway concerns, lacks essential management detail, and relies on a Transport Statement with fundamental weaknesses. [REDACTED] remain deeply concerned about the impact on the neighbourhood and the wellbeing of future occupants. Unless the applicant can provide clear, evidence-based assurances addressing these issues in full [REDACTED] believe the development should not proceed.

Given the number of unresolved questions, we also request that the Council arrange a local meeting [REDACTED] so concerns can be discussed openly, and meaningful engagement can take place before any decision is made.

Yours faithfully,

