



'Rogue' landlord ordered to pay back £740k in earnings from 'overcrowded' properties

3 March 2021 by Gavin McEwan

A "rogue landlord" has been ordered to pay back £739,264 in illicit earnings made from overcrowded properties that had been unlawfully converted into houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and tiny flats, or else face a five-year jail sentence.

According to a statement from the London Borough of Brent, the order was made by Harrow Crown Court against Mohammed Mehdi Ali of High Road, Willesden, following a prosecution brought by the authority using the Proceeds of Crime Act.

At a hearing on 12 February, Ali was found guilty of failing to comply with planning enforcement notices made in April 2018, following investigations by the borough's planning enforcement team.

Brent Council said its financial investigators and planning enforcement officers uncovered a number of properties owned by Ali and his father that were being used unlawfully as HMOs and as undersized flats.

The court told Ali he would face a prison term of five years and nine months if he did not pay the order in full within three months.

The council said the confiscation order, made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, "is believed to be the largest such order for a planning breach made anywhere in the country so far this year".

He was also ordered to pay the council £30,000 in costs arising from the long-running case. Sentencing for the enforcement notice breaches was adjourned.

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She added: “The accommodation provided was some of the worst residential accommodation that officers have ever come across. Brent will not tolerate this type of behaviour, landlords providing such horrible conditions.”

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