

281 NEW ROAD PORTSMOUTH PO2 7RA

CHANGE OF USE FROM DWELLINGHOUSE (CLASS C3)/ HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (CLASS C4) TO 7 PERSON HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (SUI GENERIS)

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Application Submitted By:

Mr Edward Kercher
Collective Studio

On behalf of:

Mrs Serena Froom

RDD: 9th August 2022

LDD: 11th October 2022

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 This application is brought before Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Vernon-Jackson
- 1.2 The main issues for consideration in the determination of the application are as follows:
 - Principle of Development including compliance with policy
 - Impacts on Amenity including parking
 - Other material considerations
- 1.3 Site and surroundings
- 1.3 The application site is a two storey terraced dwelling with rooms in the roof in a predominately residential area.
- 1.4 The Proposal
- 1.5 The Applicant has sought planning permission for the change of use of the dwelling from the current lawful use of as an HMO with up to six individuals living together to allow up to 7 individuals to live together as an HMO. This change in occupancy will involve the repurposing of internal rooms but no external operational development forms part of this application
- 1.6 Planning History
- 1.7 22/00831/FUL - Change of use from dwelling house (Class C3) to purposes falling within Class C4 (House in Multiple Occupation) or Class C3 (dwelling house) - Granted August 2022. It is unclear, at the time of the production of this officers' report whether this planning permission has yet been implemented.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 In addition to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), the relevant policies within the Portsmouth Plan (2012) would include: PCS17 (Transport), PCS20 (Houses in Multiple Occupation and PCS23 (Design and Conservation).

- 2.2 Guidance for the assessment of applications that is relevant to the application includes The Parking Standards and Transport Assessments Supplementary Planning Document (2014), The Technical Housing Standards - nationally described space standards (2015), The Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (2017), The Interim Nutrient Neutral Mitigation Strategy (2019), and The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Supplementary Planning Document (2019) ('the HMO SPD')

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Private Sector Housing: The City Council Private Sector Housing team advise that this property would require to be licenced under Part 2, Housing Act 2004.

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 2 representations received which can be summarised as; parking issues, overdevelopment of the property, waste issues, loss of property value to neighbours, noise disturbance and precedence set for other HMOs in the area.

5.0 COMMENT

- 5.1 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application is whether the proposal is acceptable in principle.

5.2 Principle

- 5.3 The HMO SPD has been published to provide a tool for addressing the recognised impacts that HMO's may have in Portsmouth, most notably in relation to the residential amenity, both for occupiers of HMO's and neighbouring properties and housing mix of certain communities. Two of the key matters of principles explained in the HMO SPD are the assessment of housing mix to ensure balanced communities and the application of minimum room sizes, reflecting those in force as part of the private sector housing licencing regime, to ensure an appropriate living environment for future residents.
- 5.4 In this case the application site has already been granted planning permission to become a 6-bed HMO and at the time of production of the officers' report is unclear whether it is already in lawful use as an HMO. An update will be provided to the meeting of the Committee to resolve that position. Through the making of this application the applicant is asserting that the current use is as approved in August and consequently the application has been made to recognise the intention to increase its occupation by 1 occupant. Whether the lawful use of the dwelling is for single family occupancy (C3), available through a 'dual use' for either single family occupancy or HMO occupancy the application is not considered, in either scenario and on its individual facts to create any material impact on the balance of the community in the area. The HMO SPD suggests a threshold of 10% of dwellings in any area of 50m radius as a maximum proportion of HMO dwellings to C3, single household, dwellings. The application site is the only HMO, or potential HMO, which would result as it is 1 property out of 46 properties within the relevant 50m radius area, in a percentage of 2.17%. If the previous planning permission which first allowed the change in the use of this dwelling to be an HMO has not been implemented then this proposal of course has no effect on that percentage. And therefore in either case the development would not result in a concentration, proliferation or distribution of HMOs that would be considered to result in an imbalance in the community.
- 5.5 The HMO use of this site is not currently Licensed by the Council's PSH Licensing Team.
- 5.6 The repurposing of internal rooms to accommodate the additional occupants within this proposal will have an effect on the ratio of communal/amenity space compared to private bedroom space available internally for future occupants when compared to that approved

in the previous scheme earlier this year. While this matter will also be considered as part of the necessary licensing of the HMO by the Private Sector Housing team under the Housing Act, the HMO SPD identifies this as a consideration as part of the assessment of whether a good standard of living environment is provided for future residents as required by Local Plan Policy PCS23. Under the current proposal the following room sizes would be provided, as compared to the minimum size prescribed in the Council's adopted guidance:

Room	Area Provided (msq):	Required Standard (msq):
Bedroom 1	11.49	6.51
<i>Ensuite 1</i>	<i>2.74</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Bedroom 2	12.68	6.51
<i>Ensuite 2</i>	<i>3.51</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Bedroom 3	10.79	6.51
<i>Ensuite 3</i>	<i>2.74</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Bedroom 4	11.01	6.51
<i>Ensuite 4</i>	<i>3.37</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Bedroom 5	10.32	6.51
<i>Ensuite 5</i>	<i>2.74</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Bedroom 6	10.95	6.51
<i>Ensuite 6</i>	<i>2.74</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Bedroom 7	10.82	6.51
<i>Ensuite 7</i>	<i>2.74</i>	<i>2.74</i>
Combined Living Space	25.77	22.5



5.7 As is shown in the table above, the proposal results in an internal layout that meets a straightforward appraisal against the Council's adopted space standards in accordance with the HMO SPD, at para 2.6, which advises that more detailed guidance, beyond the preliminary headline requirements should be referred to within the Council's standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation Guidance (September 2018). This more detailed guidance applies lower minimum requirements (of 22.5m²) for combined living accommodation in circumstances where all bedrooms are at least 10m² and the accommodation is otherwise acceptable as communal space. On the basis of the information supplied with the application this detailed guidance is considered applicable and the resulting layout is considered to result in a satisfactory standard of living environment for seven occupants.

5.8 Amenity and Parking

5.8 The proposal would increase the occupancy of the existing approved HMO by 1 occupant. While this would have a proportionate increase in activity within and coming and going from the property this small increase in the number of residents is not considered likely to have any demonstrable adverse effect on residential amenity for neighbours of the surrounding area.

5.9 Similarly the minor increase of approved occupants is not considered to have a demonstrable impact on the parking need and thus parking availability in the wider area. It is noted that the Council's adopted Parking Standards, within the associated SPD has the same expectation for the number of parking spaces, 2 spaces per dwelling, for any scale of HMO with 4 or more dwellings. Consequently, the proposal remains in accordance with the Council's adopted guidance on parking provision.

5.10 Other Material Considerations

5.11 A key and overriding consideration in this case is the necessity to recognise the fall-back position available to the applicant; that is the position they could take if this application is refused. In this case that matter is slightly more complex due to the uncertainty in respect of whether the previous scheme (22/00831/FUL) has been implemented. Through the making of this application the applicant has asserted that it has and the recommendation is therefore concluded on that basis. In that circumstance the addition of only 1 occupant to the existing lawful HMO is not considered to amount to a material change in the use of the dwelling. Under s57 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ('TCPA') there is a general requirement that development should not be carried out, except with planning permission. However not all changes of use are considered to be 'development' and therefore not all changes require planning permission. Under s55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 'development' is defined as making of a *material* change in the use of any buildings or land. Whether or not a change is a material change is a matter of fact and degree to be assessed on its own merits. Members will note a recent joint appeal decision (the 'Campbell Properties' appeal dated 29 April 2021) wherein the Inspector considered a number of similar changes of use and, on their individual merits, identified examples whereby a change in the occupancy of an existing HMO with up to 6 occupants to an occupancy up to 7 occupants, and a change in occupancy from up to 6 occupants to an occupancy of up to 8 occupants was not considered to be a material change of use notwithstanding it moved the classification of the dwellings outside of Use Class C4 of the Use Classes Order. While every application must be considered on their own individual merits these examples provide clear guidance on the correct interpretation of s55 of the TCPA and that appeal decision is considered to be a material consideration in the determination of similar applications. Members may also note the previous decisions of Portsmouth's Planning Committee in, for example, February and May 2022 which have assessed applications both for certification of lawfulness and in respect of planning permission for change of use, to alter the occupation of a number of HMO with up to 6 occupants to either a 7 or 8 bedroom, 7 or 8 occupant HMO. Contrary to Officer recommendation in these cases the Committee determined that these changes in occupation amounted to a material change

in use, primarily due to a conclusion that due to the intensity of the use of the accommodation; the impact on parking, waste, amenity impact upon neighbouring residents; and the impact on the Solent special protection area the changes considered in those cases on their own individual merits amount to development requiring planning permission.

- 5.12 In the circumstances of the case the subject of this report it is considered that the increase in occupancy, if the previous HMO planning permission has been implemented, does not result in a significant difference in the character of the activities that would occur under the proposed occupation compared to the existing lawful use as a HMO with up to six occupants. As such in that case it is considered that the change of use is not material and planning permission is not required for the increase in occupancy described in the application. The Applicant therefore has a fall-back position of being able to lawful carry out the change in occupation without the benefit of Planning Permission.
- 5.13 Alternatively if the previous planning permission (22/00831/FUL) has not been implemented then this application should be assessed as if it were a change of use between a single household dwelling (C3) and a 7-bed HMO. For the reasons described above, with the mix and balance of the community and the overall living environment found to be acceptable and in accordance with the Council's published guidance, this alternative scenario also recommends the grant of planning permission for what would, on its own merits be considered a material change of use requiring planning permission.
- 5.14 Which scenario, dependent on whether application 22/00831/FUL has been implemented, is the correct one will be updated at the meeting of the Planning Committee, as it is open to the landowner to of course implement that permission and change the status of the dwelling at any point between the production of this report and that meeting in accordance with the permission already granted.
- 5.14 Impact on Special Protection Areas
- 5.15 Whilst it is acknowledged that there are ongoing issues around the nitrification of the Solent due to increased levels of runoff from residential development. The applicants above fall-back position would allow the occupation of the site without Planning Permission either as a single household dwelling or a six bed HMO. As such, if planning permission as a six bed HMO has been implemented it is considered that the proposal would not amount to development and therefore not have Likely Significant Effect on the Solent Special Protection Areas or result in an increased level of nitrate discharge. However if that planning permission has not been implemented then the proposal does, on its own facts, amount to development and appropriate mitigation for an increased level of nitrate discharge will be required. As noted above the status of the dwelling at the time of the decision will be updated for the Committee, and the applicant's willingness to provide an appropriate scheme of mitigation will also be confirmed.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 As detailed above the application is considered to fully comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan whether or not the previous scheme (22/00831/FUL) has been implemented.
- 6.2 If the updated to the Committee confirms that the previous scheme has been implemented Officers recommend that this proposal does not require planning permission. In that circumstance however should the Committee conclude, contrary to this recommendation, that the change in occupation, as a matter of planning judgement, fact and degree in this specific case results in a material change of use requiring planning permission then they should consider whether permission should be granted with conditions. In such a circumstance, as the merits of the proposed use comply fully with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and associated guidance, the Committee would need to consider whether to resolve to grant permission, subject to the imposition

of conditions requiring implementation of the additional occupancy within 1 year (a Time Limit condition), requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with plans submitted (an Approved Plans condition), and requiring that that increased occupancy should not occur until an appropriate scheme of mitigation is submitted and approved to mitigate any impact on the Solent Special Protection Area. This alternative, conditional permission would be relevant in either of the circumstances that the previous permission has been implemented, but Members consider that the change in occupancy amounts to development, or in the scenario that the previous permission has not been implemented and the assessment of this proposal is the same as that for an application for a change of use between use class C3 and a 7-bed HMO.

RECOMMENDATION

Unconditional Permission

Conditions: None