

From: Sarah West [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 10:31 AM
To: Section 62A Applications Non Major <section62anonmajor@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Objection to Planning Application S62A/2024/0041

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Bristol City Council Planning Committee

Objection to Planning Application S62A/2024/0041 – Change of Use from single household dwelling to House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) at 20 Conway Road BS4 3RF, and associated changes to internal layout.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to formally object to the planning application referenced above, proposing the change of use from a 3-bedroom 1930's semi-detached house to a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodating up to 7 persons (Class C4) at 20 Conway Road.

While I appreciate the need for diverse housing options within our community, the proposed conversion raises significant concerns that I urge the Planning Authority to carefully consider. I note that the owners are a property development company based in Wales that seems to be targeting this area of Brislington with multiple HMO applications recently, further pushing out hard-working Bristolians who can no longer afford to live in their own city. I draw your attention to the recent application at 17 Bloomfield Road (22/05171/F), just a few hundred feet away. This application was refused, and I encourage you to apply the same common sense to this application, as the same issues are present.

The proposed conversion to an HMO would fundamentally alter the residential character of the neighbourhood. Semi-detached houses in Sandy Park, particularly those built in the 1930s, contribute to the distinct character and charm of the area. Conway Road is a small, peaceful cul-de-sac primarily housing families. Introducing an HMO in this context risks disrupting the cohesive residential fabric, leading to negative social and visual impacts and affecting the quality of life of those living on either side of number 20.

The increased occupancy resulting from the conversion to an HMO will place additional strain on local infrastructure, including parking facilities, waste collection services, and healthcare facilities. Without adequate provision for these essential services, residents of both the proposed HMO and the surrounding community may experience inconvenience and decreased quality of life.

We already have several unlicensed HMOs on the street, which my neighbours and I have raised objections with Bristol City Council about previously and have been told there is no capacity for enforcement. It is not appropriate to base your review solely on licensed HMOs when we have tried our best to inform you there are unlicensed HMOs on the street, already causing issues for residents.

HMOs are often associated with higher levels of noise and disturbance compared to single-family residences. Given the proximity of neighbouring properties, the conversion could lead to disturbances such as late-night noise, increased foot traffic, and parking congestion, negatively impacting the peaceful enjoyment of nearby residents' homes.

Bristol, like many cities, faces a shortage of family housing. Converting a 3-bedroom family home into an HMO diminishes the availability of such housing stock, potentially exacerbating the existing housing crisis and limiting options for families seeking suitable accommodation in the area. The planned changes to the property's internal footprint make it extremely unlikely that it would ever return to a single-family home, as this would require significant expenditure.

It is disingenuous to suggest that the fallback option in this application represents one additional person compared to a single household, as even six adults and their associated friends and partners are not comparable to a family's lifestyle.

20 Conway Road currently has a mature garden providing a green space that contributes to local wildlife and to residents' well-being and quality of life. The planned conversion, particularly the proposed access via the rear alley and conversion of the garden to bike storage will result in a loss of this amenity and further diminish the overall desirability of the neighbourhood for families and residents seeking green spaces.

The suggestion that this would be a car-free household is equally laughable. The existing HMO residents on the street all have cars, some in addition to work vans. Conway Road is a small cul-de-sac with already limited on-street parking. Due to the level change in the front garden of number 20, a driveway is not feasible. Multiple additional cars would exacerbate the issues on the road, which risks an unsafe situation for vehicles turning at the top of the cul-de-sac and blocking access for emergency vehicles.

In light of these concerns, I respectfully urge the Planning Authority to reject the proposed change of use application. While I acknowledge the need for housing diversity, it is crucial to balance this with the preservation of the existing residential character and the well-being of the local community.

Thank you for considering my objections. Please do not hesitate to contact me if further information is required.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah West

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