

From: Hannah Foster [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 March 2025 00:28
To: Section 62A Applications Non Major
<section62anonmajor@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Application Number: 25/10551/PINSSubject: Objection to Planning Application – Orchard House

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the above-referenced planning application, which seeks to construct additional flats onto the existing Orchard House building. Given the current state of the building and the serious concerns regarding its fire safety, this proposal presents a significant risk to residents and the wider community.

For context, I have included links to recent media reports outlining the ongoing issues at Orchard House:

1. Bristol Cable: [REDACTED]
2. BBC News: [REDACTED]
3. Sky News: [REDACTED]

The current freeholder of Orchard House is Stockwood Land 2 Limited, under the directorship of [REDACTED] who was a director of this entity until July 2023, is now seeking planning permission for further development through Stockwood Land Limited.

As early as May 2021, leaseholders commissioned an initial assessment for an EWS1 form, which was unable to be signed off under Option A due to the presence of combustible and unidentified materials. A subsequent intrusive EWS1 Option B survey was conducted in April 2023, concluding with a B2 rating—indicating an inadequate standard of fire safety requiring urgent remedial works and interim measures.

Despite being aware of the building's unsafe condition since at least May 2023, the freeholder has taken no steps to remediate these issues. In December 2023, I, along with another leaseholder, secured one of the first First Tier Property Tribunal (FTT) Remediation Orders (CH1/00HB/2023/0007), mandating the freeholder to complete remedial works by 12 June 2024. However, no action has been taken, and the freeholder did not participate in the FTT proceedings.

Since the 2023 survey, the freeholder has severed all communication with leaseholders and our management company. Despite this, ground rent continues to be collected.

Attempts to access government assistance via the Cladding Safety Scheme have also been obstructed, as the freeholder refuses to engage with the application process or delegate authority to the management company. Homes England has made multiple attempts to contact the freeholder since August 2024, all of which have been ignored.

██████████ and their associated companies have a troubling track record of submitting planning applications for new developments at Orchard House while being fully aware of the existing safety defects. There is also a clear pattern of applying for care home developments before switching to residential use as a means of circumventing affordable housing obligations, as was the case with Orchard House.

I previously attended an appeal hearing regarding a prior application, where I met representatives from Horizon Homes, Stokes Morgan, and legal representatives associated with ██████████. Despite assurances that our concerns would be addressed, we have received no further communication—only yet another planning application by the same individuals.

Furthermore, ██████████ have a documented history of non-compliance with fire safety regulations, including being fined by Avon Fire for breaches at another property. Their involvement in numerous planning and development disputes over the past decade further underscores their disregard for regulatory obligations.

Multiple authorities—including Bristol City Council, Avon Fire, Homes England, MP ██████████ and various media outlets—have unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a response from the freeholder. Leaseholders and the management company have faced the same lack of engagement.

The ongoing situation has had a devastating impact ██████████ ██████████ ██████████. I purchased my property in 2018 using a government-backed Help to Buy loan, believing it to be a safe investment. Now, I find myself in an untenable position—I am unable to sell, remortgage, or repay my loan, leaving me trapped in an unsafe home with no viable options for resolution.

Approving further construction on a building already rated B2 for fire safety is not just illogical—it is a severe risk to life. Orchard House is demonstrably unsafe, and introducing additional fire hazards through construction work would exacerbate an already critical situation. Any extension of the existing structure would itself be subject to the same B2 rating, compounding the current dangers rather than addressing them.

I appreciate your time in reviewing my objection. While I recognize that some of the information provided may go beyond the standard requirements for a planning objection, it is crucial that your department fully understands the gravity of our circumstances and the profound impact your decision will have on the 54 leaseholders of Orchard House.

Yours sincerely,
Hannah Foster