



Decision Notice and Statement of Reasons

Decision By Zoe Raygen DipURP MRTPI

Site visit undertaken on 2 October 2025

A person appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 October 2025

Application Reference: S62A/2025/0113

Site address: 888 Chasefield House, Fishponds Road, Bristol BS16 3XB

- The application is made under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
 - The site is located within the administrative area of Bristol City Council.
 - The application dated 24 July 2025 is made by HAS 7 Ltd and was validated on 29 July 2025.
 - The development proposed is for the conversion of existing care home (Use Class C2) to provide two separate, large Sui Generis HMO's (1no. 9 bedroom and 1no. 10 bedroom) together with associated external alterations to the building.
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Decision

1. Planning permission is refused for development described above for the following reason:
 - The proposal would not provide sufficient safe parking on site leading to increased pressure on street parking that already experiences high levels of parking stress and highway safety problems exacerbating those problems. In addition the inability to control parking in the front forecourt area would restrict the ability of cars to leave the application site in a forward gear. As a result, cars would need to reverse from the site onto the public highway. The lack of visibility into and out of the site may result in collision between cars and pedestrians and consequently would be harmful to highway safety contrary to Policy DM23 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014 and Policy BCS10 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 and paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Statement of Reasons

Procedural matters

2. The application was made under Section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which allows for applications to be made directly to the Planning Inspectorate where a Council has been designated by the Secretary of State. Bristol City Council (BCC) have been designated for non-major applications since 6 March 2024.
3. Publicity of the application has been carried out in the Bristol Evening Post. Consultation was undertaken on 5 August 2025 which allowed for responses by 4 September 2025. Responses from 6 interested parties were received as well as from the Bristol Tree Forum. In addition responses were received from the Coal Authority and the Police Crime Prevention Unit.
4. Bristol City Council (BCC) submitted comments on 4 September 2025 which indicated that it considered the application should be refused planning permission due to issues regarding parking stress and highway safety.
5. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that I pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
6. I carried out a site visit on 2 October 2025, which enabled me to view the site as well as the surrounding area.
7. I have taken account of all written representations in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

8. Having regard to the application, the consultation responses, and the information from BCC, together with what I saw on site, the main issues for this application are:
 - the effect of the proposal on highway safety;
 - whether the proposal would result in an acceptable housing mix in the locality;
 - the effects on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby residential properties; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Stapleton and Frome Valley Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

Relevant Planning History and Background

9. The application site consists of two semidetached Victorian Villas which form the main part of a former 15 bedroom care home, granted planning permission in 1990 but which has been vacant since January 2020. To the rear is a long single storey off shoot attached by a link extension and an extended coach

house. The building has external staircases on the side and rear and informal parking to the front.

10. The proposal is for the change of use of the care home to provide two separate Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) one of which would be nine bedroom and the other ten bedroom. The link to the rear wing would be demolished and the rear wing is outside of the application site with a new boundary wall to be erected to separate the two sites. Access to the HMO would be from the road to the front with a separate access and exit and two car parking spaces provided together with bin storage in the front forecourt.
11. In 2023 planning permission was refused for the conversion of the premises to provide shared supported accommodation with 19 beds¹. The application was refused as it was considered it would give rise to unacceptable traffic and highway safety conditions, would harm residential amenity and the character of the locality as a result of levels of on-street parking that cannot be reasonably accommodated on the surrounding streets given the location of the application site in an area which currently experiences high levels of parking stress.
12. An application for the redevelopment of the site to the rear of the application site for the erection of five dwellings is pending consideration by the Council².

Highway safety and parking

13. The site is located at the confluence of Downend Road (A432) and Staple Hill Road (B4465), where they become Fishponds Road (A432). All are subject to a 20mph speed limit.
14. As there is no specific parking requirement for HMO within the Development Plan, the Council considers, based on census data, that the proposal would generate a requirement for 7 parking spaces. The proposal only allows for the provision of two spaces on site and therefore the remaining 5 spaces would need to be accommodated on street. However, I saw at my site visit that on street parking is extremely limited. Much is restricted and where it was not there was very limited free space available. Indeed, I was unable to find space; while this is not determinative it reinforces my concerns regarding the reliance on street parking.
15. I also noted that the application site is located close to shops and facilities, just a short walk away, as well as a bus route into the centre of Bristol. While therefore it would not be essential for all occupiers to have a car, I must have regard to the evidence supplied by the Council that at least 7 of the residents are likely to have cars which would need to be accommodated safely. However, due to the lack of available on street parking, this may lead to inconsiderate parking near the road junctions or parking on the pavement which is wide in this location to the detriment of highway users

¹ 22/02990/F

² 25/11020/F

and exacerbating an already busy location where the evidence from the Council reports a number of accidents.

16. Furthermore, from my observations on site there is room to accommodate more vehicles than two on the existing frontage. It is also difficult to see from the road, due to the existing boundary treatment and planting, whether there is parking available prior to pulling onto the site. As a result, due to the size of the frontage, if there were more than two vehicles parked, it is likely that a further car entering the site would be unable to pass through to exit the site from the second access and leave in a forward gear but would need to reverse out onto the road. The existing wall restricts visibility and although there is a wide pavement, there would be the potential for collision with vehicles and pedestrians.
17. I accept that this is an existing situation and that the previous use of the site was a care home, which according to the applicant would generate the need for 10.5 car parking spaces using the Councils adopted maximum parking standards. However, the proposal is for large HMO with the potential for 19 residents, all of whom could have access to a car, unlike the residents of a care home. Furthermore, just because the parking standard results in a requirement for 10.5 spaces, that does not mean they could have been safely accommodated.
18. I note that the adjacent property at 686 Fishponds Road recently received planning permission for conversion to a 7 bed HMO³. However, this proposes much less accommodation than the current proposal resulting in lower potential traffic movements and requirement for parking spaces.
19. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to highway safety. Consequently it would conflict with Policy DM23 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014 (the Local Plan) and Policy BCS10 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 (the CS). Together these require that development provides a safe and adequate access for all sections of the community within the development and onto the highway network as well as ensure the provision of safe streets.

Mix of uses

20. The proposal would result in the loss of the existing care home facility on the site which can reasonably be considered as a community facility of the type that Policy DM5 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure would not be lost. The building has not been used as a care home since 2020, and the applicant reports that it would not be possible to refurbish the building to meet current Care Quality Commission standards and regulations. Furthermore, when the building was originally marketed in 2021 there was only one interested party considering its use as a care home, but the cost of works was considered to be prohibitive. In addition, there was little, if any, interest from parties considering a community use with the predominant interest coming from developers for housing or HMO.

³ 24/01860/F

21. I also note that on considering a recent planning application for the change of use from a care home to a HMO the Council was satisfied that there are a sufficient number of care homes in the north of the City to meet demand and there was no objection to the loss. While this is not necessarily determinative in itself, it reinforces my view that the information supplied by the applicant is sufficient to ensure compliance with Policy DM5. While the proposal would be operated by a company that provides housing for vulnerable groups in society which could be considered as a community use as envisaged by Policy DM5, there is no guarantee that this would always be the case, and it would not be reasonable to condition it as such. However, for the reasons above, I am satisfied that there would be no conflict with the development plan in this respect.
22. Policy DM2 of the Local Plan states that the conversion of existing dwellings to HMO will not be permitted where it creates or contributes to a harmful concentration of such uses within a locality as a result of reducing the choice of homes in the area by changing the housing mix. The Council's publication Managing the Development of Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document 2020 (the SPD) provides guidance in applying Policy DM2 and provides a definition of what represents a harmful concentration.
23. In this instance there would not be a sandwiching effect where a single family dwelling would be located between two HMO. The SPD goes on to advise that a harmful concentration is found to exist where a threshold proportion of 10% HMO within 100 metres of the application site occurs. The Council advises that as of September 2025, within 100 metres of the application site there are 141 residential properties, 10 of which are HMO giving a percentage of 7.09%, well below the threshold of the SPD. It is not clear if this includes the neighbouring property 886 Fishponds Road. However, even if it does not, the addition of this unit would not lead to the percentage crossing the SPD threshold.
24. I note comments from local residents who consider that there is a much higher percentage of HMO in the local area. At my site visit, while I saw evidence of HMO it was not to an extent that the overall mix of uses was harmfully affected or there would be a concentration of particular uses. There is no compelling challenge to the figures provided by the Council, therefore I am satisfied that the proposal would not harm the mix and balance of the local community and comply with policy DM2 in this respect.
25. Consequently, for the reasons above I conclude that the proposal would result in an acceptable housing mix in the locality in compliance with the Development Plan.

Living conditions

26. Policy DM2 of the Local Plan requires that HMO do not result in a level of activity that would cause excessive noise and disturbance to residents or exacerbate any existing harmful conditions. As I have found that the proposal would ensure that the number of HMO would be below the threshold within the SPD it is unlikely that it would exacerbate any existing issues.

27. The proposal would generate a relatively large number of residents living at the property. Noise tends to be an issue where properties share common walls with neighbouring residents and the noise of everyday living from a large number of occupants can be harmful. However, in this instance the property, is detached and set a good distance from the neighbouring properties. Furthermore, the proposal will be subject to a mandatory HMO licence. Moreover, the Council's Pollution Team is satisfied that should any antisocial behaviour issues arise due to social gatherings or late night disturbance, this can be adequately controlled through separate legislation operated by the Licencing and Pollution Control departments within the Council.
28. There are minimal external alterations which would not affect the living conditions of surrounding residents. There would be a new window to the west elevation, but this would serve a bathroom and hence could be reasonably obscured glazed. There would be no harm to residents' living conditions from loss of privacy or outlook.
29. All of the rooms in the proposed HMO would meet both the requirements set out in the Council's License Standard as well as the Nationally Described Space Standards 2015. Each habitable room would have windows offering acceptable natural light and outlook for the residents. Outside space is also provided. Therefore the proposed occupants would have acceptable living conditions.
30. Policy DM2 also states that conversions will not be permitted where levels of on-street parking cannot be reasonably accommodated or regulated through parking control measures. While I have found this to be the case, I am not convinced that this would have a harmful impact on residents living conditions or the character of the area in this instance.
31. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposal complies with Policy DM2 of the Local Plan and Policies BCS18 and BCS21 of the CS, which seek to protect the living conditions of future and neighbouring occupants.

Conservation Area

32. The CA covers a wide ranging area focusing on land abutting the River Frome, but also encompassing the villages of Stapleton, Fishponds and the perimeter of Frenchay. The area in which the application site is located has a wide range of architecture but is formed from predominantly semidetached and terraced housing set back from the road behind low walls. There are also some street trees which soften the overall urban character and appearance. The significance of the CA is, for the purposes of this application, largely derived from the form and layout of the buildings and their relationship to the street which demonstrate the evolution of the development of Bristol. The application property was previously two separate villas but now presents as one detached building. It is of an appropriate scale and design for the area set back from the road behind a low wall with a hedge above. It therefore contributes positively to the CA.

33. The property would not be significantly altered by the proposal other than the addition of a porch, new windows and the replacement of windows with doors as well as the removal of external staircase. These alterations would be carried out in a sensitive manner and would not be harmful.
34. Enclosed bike and bin storage is proposed to the side and front of the property respectively. The bin store will be low level and behind the existing front boundary so would not be overly visible or obtrusive in the street scene. The bike storage would be to the east side of the building and similarly low level and scale and would not be an obtrusive addition being set well back from the road.
35. Consequently, for the reasons above the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the area and the CA. There would be no conflict with policies BCS21 and BCS22 of the CS and policies DM26, DM27, DM30 and DM31 of the Local Plan. Together these require that development deliver high quality urban design that respects the host building, its curtilage and the broader street scene. In addition alterations safeguard or enhance heritage assets.

Conclusion

36. I have found that the proposal would be harmful to highway safety drawing it into conflict with the development plan as a whole.
37. The proposal would provide 19 units of accommodation which would contribute to housing supply. Economic benefits would arise from the conversion of the premises and the introduction of residents into the area. These are significant benefits, however the harm to highway safety would be considerable. Consequently, the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole having particular regard to key policies.
38. There are therefore no material considerations, including the Framework, which would outweigh the conflict with the development plan. For these reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the proposal is refused.

Zoe Raygen

Inspector and Appointed Person

Informatives:

- i. In determining this application, the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner. In doing so the Planning Inspectorate gave clear advice of the expectation and requirements for the submission of documents and information, ensured consultation responses were published in good time and gave clear deadlines for submissions and responses. Although amendments may make this submission acceptable, these were considered to be a fundamental change to the scheme which is not permitted.
- ii. The decision of the appointed person (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) on an application under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the Act") is final. An application to the High Court under s288(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is the only way in which the decision made on an application under Section 62A can be challenged. An application must be made within 6 weeks of the date of the decision
- iii. These notes are provided for guidance only. A person who thinks they may have grounds for challenging this decision is advised to seek legal advice before taking any action. If you require advice on the process for making any challenge you should contact the Administrative Court Office at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, WC2A 2LL (0207 947 6655) or follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/planning-court>

APPENDIX 1 Consultee responses

- Bristol Police Crime Prevention Technical Advisor
- The Coal Authority