

<b>APPLICATION NO: 16/00911/COU</b>		<b>OFFICER: Mrs Emma Pickernell</b>	
<b>DATE REGISTERED:</b> 20th May 2016		<b>DATE OF EXPIRY :</b> 15th July 2016	
<b>WARD:</b> St Pauls		<b>PARISH:</b>	
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Mr M Cooley		
<b>LOCATION:</b>	43 Courtenay Street, Cheltenham		
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Change of use from a 6 bed house in multiple occupation (HMO) to 8 bed HMO (retrospective)		

## REPRESENTATIONS

Number of contributors	<b>3</b>
Number of objections	<b>3</b>
Number of representations	<b>0</b>
Number of supporting	<b>0</b>

13 St Pauls Parade  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4ET

### **Comments:** 22nd June 2016

It is a concern that this property has been licensed by Cheltenham Borough Council to house 8 students for nearly 7 years despite not having the necessary planning permission in place.

If Cheltenham Borough Council is seriously considering additional licensing, it should be taken into account that this property would not meet the additional licensing standards set in neighbouring university cities. In these cities, a household of 8 people would require a combined living/ kitchen area of at least 27.5 m<sup>2</sup>. Based on the plans submitted here, the combined kitchen/ living room has an area of only 18.4 m<sup>2</sup>. This would only be considered big enough for 5 sharers elsewhere. It doesn't even appear to meet the standards required by the University of Gloucestershire's own Landlord Guide 2015 that a sitting room should have "sofas or easy chairs - sufficient for the number of tenants". Here they can only fit in 2 sofas and a table large enough for 4 people.

The number of tenants has been achieved by the subdivision of rooms creating several very small bedrooms. The plan is not the best with the walls appearing paper thin, and no sign of any chimney breasts, but even so, the rear ground floor bedroom appears to be under 6.5 m<sup>2</sup> in area.

It is a shame that University of Gloucestershire students are expected to live in more overcrowded conditions than their peers at other universities. This is likely to create a more stressful living environment for them as tenants.

The St Paul's Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) states that: although a student population can bring benefits to an area:

*"There is a fine line between the beneficial nature of the [student] activity and nuisance caused by the intense nature of the use" (p.15)*

The 2008 Conservation Area Character Appraisal also expresses concerns about the pressures caused by "a high level of intensification in the area, through redevelopment of buildings and spaces. This is despite the already dense nature of the character area" (p28). An 8 way let

especially in a property of this size represents an unacceptably high level of intensification - probably the highest in this street where most others are 5 and 6 way lets (even this is more than would live in the same sized property as a family home). This is made worse by the very high proportion of student lets in the street.

We estimate that Courtenay Street is now over 40% student lets/ HMOs. This creates a severe community imbalance. 43 Courtenay St is one of an estimated 19 student let HMOs in Courtenay Street. This has been contributing to problems for the neighbours in Courtenay Street (see comments on the application for 2 Courtenay Street) including problems parking (which has led to the recent introduction of a parking permit scheme), and environmental degradation due to increased rubbish outside the building and on the street, and lack of care by the tenants for the appearance of the property. But mostly the problems for neighbours have been the noise and anti-social behaviour. This is worse for neighbours when the tenants socialise outside, which is more likely when, as here, there is insufficient communal living space inside the property. The neighbour at 45 Courtenay Street already complains about not being able to leave the bedroom window open in summer.

The over-density of occupation of this property and its contribution to the community imbalance and the problems of noise and anti-social behaviour are all contrary to Cheltenham Borough Council's corporate strategy that "People live in strong, safe and healthy communities".

Although accommodation is needed to meet the university's requirements to house students, this accommodation should be of a decent quality without overcrowding, and this accommodation should not be at the expense of the community as a whole

10 Dunalley Parade  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4LX

**Comments:** 21st June 2016

This landlord has at least 6 properties in Courtenay Street alone, and at the last count totalled 16 in the area. How can a property professional not know the need to check if planning permission is required when converting on that scale?

8 students in a property this size is over development and likely to result in students socialising outside. There is already difficulty with student HMO's along that side of the road. Parties often overspill into the back gardens. These parties can be clearly heard while walking along Marle Hill Parade. The fact that this noise is hitting the rear elevations of Marle Hill Parade where residents have their bedrooms means that the misery affects many surrounding properties. This sort of over development needs limiting and this is not an appropriate property.