

<b>APPLICATION NO: 16/00797/COU</b>		<b>OFFICER: Mrs Emma Pickernell</b>	
<b>DATE REGISTERED:</b> 4th May 2016		<b>DATE OF EXPIRY :</b> 29th June 2016	
<b>WARD:</b> St Pauls		<b>PARISH:</b>	
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Mr Vince Norvill		
<b>LOCATION:</b>	2 Courtenay Street, Cheltenham		
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Change of use from a 5 bedroom shared house to a 7 bedroom house in multiple occupation.		

## REPRESENTATIONS

Number of contributors	<b>11</b>
Number of objections	<b>11</b>
Number of representations	<b>0</b>
Number of supporting	<b>0</b>

85 Brunswick Street  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4HA

**Comments:** 24th May 2016

The density of population in this house is ridiculous. 7 people in what is essentially a 2 bed house cannot offer quality accommodation on any level.

The area of St Paul's is already overpopulated with houses of multiple occupancy, primarily students, who have little interest in the area as they are here for c 2yrs. Houses with larger numbers of occupants are usually the ones that cause issues to the neighbours for example, late night noise.

This house has elderly neighbours on both sides and the noise made during the evenings before the students go out (11pm ish) is often horrific.

Very often the students are studying in Gloucester and so will often have cars and yet there are only 2 permits available per household.

53 Swindon Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4AH

**Comments:** 1st June 2016

There is clear local evidence that shows St Pauls has an unreasonable and unsustainable density of HMO's. This proposal is detrimental to community well being and building a more resilient community.

This project proposes an exceptional density which will potentially create public health issues. There is not sufficient clarity about the applications detail , this should be refined and subject to further consultation. This project would establish a dangerous precedent which would be completely contrary to the best interests of St Pauls

41 St Pauls Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4ES

**Comments:** 28th May 2016

7 students in this house is overcrowding. There is not enough shared space in the house for the students to socialise so they are more likely to socialise outside and disturb the neighbours, an elderly man and Housing association sheltered accommodation for old people. The council has been promising to look at additional licensing for nearly 2 years now. If they had done it already this house wouldn't be allowed to house 7 students.

St Paul's is a conservation area. Landlords and the council should respect and uphold this or we will have nothing left worth conserving. Changing the roof changes the appearance of the whole terrace. If one owner is allowed to get away with doing the work then only asking for permission afterwards, this sets a precedent

11 Courtenay Street  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4LR

**Comments:** 1st June 2016

I wish to raise an objection to the planning application at 2 Courtenay Street.

As a resident in this street for over 20years I have become increasingly frustrated by the seemingly unchecked development that has taking place in recent years with houses designed for families being turned into Student Lets. The infrastructure of our Street was not designed to accommodate multi occupancy dwellings and parking issues, neighbour noise at night and rubbish on the street are all increasing dramatically.

The distinctive character of Courtenay Street is being compromised and those who benefit financially from developments designed to maximize profit do not live here.

Nor is any thought or consideration given to residents who have to suffer the consequences of late night noise, traffic issues and anti social behaviour . This is inherently unfair and it is time that St Pauls gets some robust planning in place and the image of St Pauls as a poor quarter of Town where people don't matter changes...and fast! This unchecked developing by greedy speculators is ruining our vibrant community.

March Mews  
Wellesley Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4LD

**Comments:** 20th May 2016

My objection is simply based upon the proliferation of HMOs in the St Pauls area, and the wish to prevent more.

As an active member of the St Pauls Residents Association I am frequently made aware of the social problems associated with the disproportionate number of HMOs in St Pauls and the failure of CBC to address this matter.

Perhaps the planning system is the means by which to limit the further growth in the number of HMOs in the locality. I trust so.

45 Hanover Street  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4HE

**Comments:** 26th May 2016

Over development of a conservation area

St Paul's area has not been protected and preserved as a conservation area by both Gloucestershire and Cheltenham councils.

Former should not be permitted

20 Malthouse Lane  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4EY

**Comments:** 24th May 2016

This is a ridiculous proposal. Not only would it cause a serious disruption to the elderly neighbours on both sides but it a terrible example of what housing should provide. It is not an effort to give and contribute to the community but rather bleed houses dry to fill the pockets of landlords.

45 Courtenay Street  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4LR

**Comments:** 25th May 2016

I have lived in Courtenay street for 36 years and have seen the change from a mixed community of families, older people, young professionals to a predominance of HMOs mainly housing students. You would have to live here to experience the impact on daily life. The parking problems (now partially solved by permits), the rubbish - students seem unable to put lids on bins or recycling boxes or to keep up with collection days - consequently rubbish blowing around the streets, and the increase in noise, loud music played with windows open and large groups going out and returning. Especially at this time of year when students return from bars late at night and sit out in the garden completely unaware of the disruption their noise is causing. I long for the days I could leave my bedroom window open!

The idea of another FIVE bedroom house is bad enough but SEVEN bedroom is unthinkable. Who benefits from this? Only the landlord who gives no thought to the impact on the long suffering residents.

11 Courtenay Street  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4LR

**Comments:** 31st May 2016

Too much for this street - enough noise, cars, rubbish untended front & back gardens and bins left out . I would not want precedent set for all future developments of dormer and front windows. This street has particularly changed since I began living here 20 years ago with the majority of houses changing from private family occupied to multiple lets , consideration of the effect on the community as a whole needs to be taken. Greedy landlords are of no benefit to anybody and they do not look beyond the squeezing in of as many poor students as possible. I consider a 5 way let to be over the top for a the size of these houses so any more is seriously too much.

10 Dunalley Parade  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4LX

**Comments:** 25th May 2016

Mr Norvill's application form states in answer to question 3, description of proposal:

'Change of use from a 5 bedroom shared house to a 7 bedroom house in multiple occupation with shared lounge, kitchen and bathrooms.

The application goes on to state "The internal changes will not require any structural alterations and there will be no external changes to the property". It would appear that whoever drew up the plans for Mr. Norvill has accidentally confused addresses and submitted plans for somewhere else. The actual room sizes differ from those in the plans and even the most charitable of observers would be unable to reconcile the statement "The internal changes will not require any structural alterations and there will be no external changes to the property" with the reality that despite this statement, his workmen are already quite advanced in structural works including installing a rear dormer window, and excavating the basement and extending the light well to the basement window. The applicant's statement on the planning application for change of use is misleading - or inaccurate at best and planners should reject this application until accurate plans are provided and all necessary permissions have been sought and granted for the dormer window and other works.

St Paul's is part of a conservation area, and dormer windows cannot be installed without planning permission. As far as I can see, no planning permission has been sought. The other houses along this terrace do not have dormer windows. The planning department should take enforcement action against the applicant and ensure the dormer window is removed, and the original roofline is reinstated.

If the dormer window is given planning permission it creates a precedent for the rest of the terrace. Courtenay Street is an attractive street within the conservation area. Part of its attraction is the uniformity of style of the houses, including their rooflines.

If other property owners realise that you can make alterations without consent and get away with it, this will also create a precedent. We run the risk of losing all the aspects of St Paul's that make it distinctive, and its conservation areas status will be meaningless if it is not enforced. This is contrary to Cheltenham Borough Council's corporate strategy outcome that 'Cheltenham's environmental quality and heritage is protected, maintained, and enhanced'.

I also object to the change of use to a 7 way let. A 5 way let is already high density for this type of house. A 7 way let would put more pressure on the community especially the immediate neighbours. There are elderly neighbours next door and behind the property in Cheltenham Borough Homes sheltered housing. These houses are already disturbed by loud noise from students socialising late at night. Students disturb their neighbours much more when their socialising is done out of doors. Because there is so little living space in the house for the number of tenants, they are more likely to be socialising outdoors and disturbing their neighbours. Some of the rooms look too small.

The bulk of the complaints made to the university about student noise relate to Courtenay Street, Marle Hill Road and Marle Hill Parade, and it is no co-incidence that these streets have the highest proportion of Student HMO's. 42% or 19 of the 45 properties in Courtenay Street 19 are Student HMO's. The student house numbers are 2,5,9,13,14,15,22,23,25,28,30,31,32,34,35,38,41,42, and 43. Multiple complaints were made last year and during this academic year about Courtenay Street student parties that spilled out into their front and back gardens as well as the road. Some of these parties could be heard from as far away as Marle Hill Parade, and Brunswick Street. This confirms the likelihood that where there is too little living space within a property, students will socialise outdoors.

We have been told by council officers that there are plans to introduce additional licensing in St Paul's. We hope this will be soon. When additional licensing is introduced, this property is not likely to meet the size and amenity standards for a 7 way let.

Students and other house sharers deserve to have decent housing. The council's planning and built environment department has a responsibility to ensure that tenants are not exploited and overcrowded due to landlords' greed.

We already have a problem in Courtenay Street that there is a large number of HMOs, enough to cause a community imbalance. The government threshold is 10% and already in Courtenay Street the figure is 42%. Over intensive occupation is, and will make this worse, and is contrary to the council's corporate strategy outcome that 'People live in strong, safe and healthy communities'.

13 St Pauls Parade  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 4ET

**Comments:** 24th May 2016

I wish to comment on their current planning application for change of use to a 7 bedroom house in multiple occupation (ref: 16/00797/COU). One of my concerns is the size of the property relative to the number of people, room sizes including shared amenity space. But the quality of the plans submitted is so poor, that it is not possible to do this from the plans. The plans do not seem to be drawn to scale (despite the scale of 1:50 being given on each of the drawings). On the plans submitted there is no visible means of access to the attic stairs from the first floor.

Additionally, does the Planning department or building control have anything to do with party wall permission?

In converting the cellar to a room suitable for use as a bedroom, and in excavating the front garden, they are likely to need party wall consent from 1 and 3 Courtenay Street - neither of whom have received any such communication from the owner/ developer of 2 Courtenay Street. This is a frequent state of affairs locally, with developers and absentee landlords often excavating basements and even removing chimney breasts (worrying in a terraced house) without the party wall consent of their neighbours, or indeed even informing the neighbours.

**Comments:** 24th May 2016

Objection to the installation of a rear dormer window.

Courtenay Street is within the St Paul's Character area of the Central Conservation Area. Therefore planning permission is required for works including the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes. Construction of the rear dormer window at 2 Courtenay Street was already well

underway before planning application was sought, and that was only because the work was brought to the attention of CBC Planning Enforcement by a neighbour. The applicant owns a number of other houses in the immediate area, and has no excuse for not being aware of the article 4 direction.

Courtenay Street is a street of compact terraced artisan houses constructed before 1897. It is distinctive in St Paul's in that it is one of only perhaps 2 streets that was built by the same developer and in the same style. This gives it an attractive uniformity of frontages and roofline. The dormer window on 2 Courtenay Street is the only one visible along the rear roofline, and is clearly visible from the (surprisingly) attractive car park belonging to CBH bungalows on Dunalley Parade. For this reason, the dormer window should not be given planning permission and the original roofline should be restored.

If it was allowed to proceed, it would create a precedent for other property owners, and the roofline would be lost. It would also create a precedent for over intensification of development and occupation of these properties. These houses were designed as 2 storey, 2 bedroom homes, not as 4 storey, 7 bedroom homes.

The initial set of plans also suggest that it is intended to install a dormer window at the front of the loft conversion (where there is currently a velux window). I object to this as well on the same grounds as above: that it would spoil the currently attractive uniform roof line.

#### Objection to change of use to a 7 bedroom HMO

Courtenay Street is an attractive street of typically 2 bedroom terrace houses. 10 years ago it was largely made up of family homes. It has recently been targeted by landlords creating student lets, due to its attractiveness and the common footprint of the houses. (If you've converted one, you know exactly what to expect when converting another). There are now several 5-way student lets on the street. It is likely to be approaching 50% HMOs, although we do not have accurate figures available. This density of occupation is already putting pressure on the community, and the street becomes less attractive as front gardens are replaced with wheelie bins.

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). A 7 way let represents an unacceptably high level of intensification.

The immediate neighbours of this property include a very elderly man in poor health, and to the rear of the property are a number of CBH old people's bungalows. These residents are already regularly disturbed by late night student noise, especially as students often socialise in the back gardens (due in part to lack of space inside the house). An increase in the number of occupants of 2 Courtenay Street is likely to lead to an increase in noise disturbance.

Cheltenham Borough Council has declared its intention to introduce additional licensing for HMOs in the St Paul's area. As well as addressing HMO management issues, additional licensing also specifies minimum amenity standards, including room sizes and shared facilities. It is likely that Cheltenham Borough Council would require the same standards for Cheltenham students and house sharers that they already enjoy in Bristol, Bath and Worcester. Despite the poor quality of the plans submitted and their lack of attention to scale, it is clear (from external measurements and internal measurements of neighbouring houses of the same type) that at least 1 of the bedrooms would not meet the 6.5m<sup>2</sup> area usually specified in Additional Licensing

minimum standard. The communal area including kitchen falls short of the 27.5m<sup>2</sup> deemed necessary for 7 sharers.

The applicant's failure to communicate with the immediate neighbours prior to excavation and roof works adjoining their properties, along with an apparent indifference and carelessness to planning regulations call into question whether he would be a fit and proper person to manage a large HMO. This lack of consideration for the neighbours, the riding roughshod over planning and regulatory procedures, and the lack of care for the quality of accommodation afforded to his potential tenants are already a matter of concern for holding a mandatory HMO licence for this property. This is despite him already owning and managing a number of student HMOs in the area.

**Comments:** 25th May 2016

It is curious to note that on the planning application for change of use, the applicant states "The internal changes will not require any structural alterations and there will be no external changes to the property".

Most people would consider the excavation of a basement light well and the construction of a dormer window on a sloping roof to constitute structural alterations and external changes.