

Planning Application APP/26/00065
1 Ferndale, Waterloooville, 9-room large HMO

I object to the proposed development of 1 Ferndale for the following reasons:

Character of the area: Ferndale [redacted text] is primarily a street of detached properties, with the premise that each one serves as a family home for one family. Number 1 Ferndale is already completely different from the rest of the road, in that it is divided into four flats. The application to convert the property into an HMO increases the disparity in use between this property and the surrounding properties. The proposal mentions that the property as currently configured is not purpose-built for four flats and is already having a negative impact on the building itself and on the character of the area. Surely, therefore, it is even less suitable for a nine-bedsit HMO configuration, and suggests that the site will become severely overcrowded as a result.

In view of the national debate about HMOs and their desirability, what is the policy regarding HMOs in the Waterloooville area, and what are the council's regulations regarding their location within the community?

The photographs attached to the proposal show that the building has suffered from a severe lack of maintenance over many years. It got so bad a few years ago, that the landlord failed to see that there was an open sewer on the property which led to a massive rat infestation which affected several properties along the road, and led to the council serving a health notice on the property. If the landlord has already shown a total inability to maintain a four-flat property to a suitable standard, it is unlikely that he will provide the additional upkeep that will undoubtedly be necessary with an HMO. It is generally recognized that HMOs are much harder to manage and more expensive to maintain, with a rental demographic which is generally more fluid.

The planning application proposes nine individual bedrooms.

How will the landlord ensure that the individual rooms contain only one person? What is to stop an individual from renting a room and then introducing a partner or family into that unit? If several lodgers were to do that, that could increase the occupancy of the property substantially above the nine proposed, potentially to 18 or more people.

The proposal mentions high-quality accommodation aimed at professional occupants. The description of the units, however, seems to indicate low-value bedsits, which include bedroom, bathroom, toilet and cooking facilities. If the bedsits are for individuals, why show double beds? If each unit is self-contained in that way, why is it necessary to have such a large shared kitchen, lounge and dining area with so much additional equipment and seating provision for twelve chairs? The provision of that kind of facility could well be used to cater for increased numbers of non-registered occupants.

Changing the external appearance of the property is not mentioned in the *Design and Access Statement*. However, the proposed elevations show a great deal of new fenestration, far more than is currently present.

Parking within the property: The proposed parking solution does not work. As the proposed gated entrance opens inwards automatically, the car nearest the gate will be unable to manoeuvre to exit. The vehicle next to it is likely to struggle too. The vehicle parked nearest the house, in the row of

cars, looks as if it might have to drive over some form of kerbing to manoeuvre in and out (the plans don't make it clear what the real clearance or surface is). If the gate is sensor-operated and opens inwards, what happens when a car is moving to leave the property and a vehicle is moving into the queuing space? Would the queuing vehicle be required to back onto a road, close to a dangerous junction off a dual carriageway? Is there sufficient manoeuvring space within the parking area for two vehicles to meet and pass each other? Will there be sufficient manoeuvring room for a delivery vehicle entering the parking area to turn around in order to exit the property driving forwards, especially if the parking area is full?

Parking on the road: the proposer already mentions current problems with parking on the road and mentions the caravans parked on the property. The landlord could already have insisted at any time during the past years that caravans be parked in alternative off-site parking, thus alleviating the pressure on parking spaces for cars. It should be noted that these caravans have been there for many years and hardly ever move. Owing to the turnover of tenants over previous years, it may well be that the caravans don't actually belong to tenants, but maybe to the landlord? I live three doors away from No.1 Ferndale and I have daily issues with visibility on exiting my drive. I cannot see what is coming past the parked vehicles, which are overspill from No.1, and this increases danger to myself and to oncoming vehicles. The situation has been made worse since the double yellow lines were put down. My property is the first one beyond the lines, so the parking is worst at this point. The proposed plan does not guarantee to alleviate the parking problems, for the following reasons:

- The manoeuvrability parking issues outlined above
- If occupancy were to increase beyond the nine people proposed, for the reasons given above, insufficient additional space for parking on the property would automatically place pressure on parking on the roadside.
- Visitor parking is not addressed. Visitors to the property will still need to park on the road if all the unit parking spaces are occupied

The council should consider extending the double yellow lines beyond the bend opposite No. 13 Ferndale to ensure the free flow of traffic onto and from the dual carriageway, and avoid the blind spots and blockages caused by cars from No.1 parked along a bendy stretch of road. All the properties along Ferndale have driveways that easily accommodate two vehicles, so they would not be impacted by an extension of the double yellow lines.

Amenities: the proposal includes shared waste and recycling bins. Is the number of bins provided sufficient for the number of occupants? Who will be responsible for moving the bins to the site entrance on collection days? Is it expected that the occupants will take turns to do this? What happens if disagreements arise and the bins are not moved, leading to overfilling and unhygienic leakage?

General points: the fact that the property is no longer financially viable is not a valid reason for converting it into an HMO. The owner is clearly only interested in the potential high rental yield. Given the history of poor and low maintenance and the lack of interest shown by the owner in the property as currently configured, we have no confidence that the increased level of maintenance required in this conversion would be forthcoming. The owner might consider selling the property to enable someone else to convert the property back into a single family occupied house entirely in character with the rest of the road.