

Objection to Planning Application 24/1046 for a 7-Bedroom HMO at 19 Milman Street

We are writing to formally and strongly object to the planning application referenced above for the conversion of the property at 19 Milman Street into a 7-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

The property is a 3 bed family home, which is similar to all of the other existing homes in the area, and converting this to a HMO with transient single occupation tenants will adversely affect our quiet family orientated neighbourhood, and will alter the character of our community. The famous Pill community spirit has already been eroded over the years due to a number of negative factors including poor community management and planning decisions. The transient nature of HMO occupants will undermine community cohesion and stability and these short-term residents will have no community spirit or pride in the neighbourhood and the community as a whole.

There is a severe shortage of quality private rented family homes in Pill. A local family waited 18 months before they were able to locate and secure a decent family home, and when a private rented family home in Alice Street went on the market last year there were over 20 applicants for the property. The applicant should be making the necessary improvements and renting 19 Milman Street out as a single family home, like he has with the other buy to rent properties that he owns. Changing family homes into HMOs is detrimental to the community as a whole and will further erode community cohesion in an area that prides itself about its longstanding strong multicultural and multi-generational community spirit.

The plans specify a 7 bedroom HMO but there is no indication of whether these bedrooms will be for single occupants, or two occupants. Potentially the HMO could lead to an increase of up to 14 residents. Please can we have confirmation of how many individuals will occupy each proposed bedroom?

There is already an excessive volume of traffic in Milman Street and the surrounding areas. The roads are blocked off at the end of Alice Street and Milman Street and therefore the route down from Alexandra Road to Alice Street to Wolseley Street to Milman Street is a main thoroughfare for drivers travelling towards Docks Way to access the retail estates, and beyond. Local residents have suffered due to these high levels of traffic for many years, which only continues to increase year on year. There have been many accidents on the corner of 19 Milman Street where local residents have suffered damage to our vehicles caused by hit and run drivers. This HMO, with a potential of up to 14 residents, will further increase the levels of traffic, and harmful emissions, bringing further negative impacts and risks to health and safety.

We note that the Highways officer has specified that he has no objections to the application subject to conditions and these conditions relate to the vehicular access on Wolseley Street and the proposed bike storage facilities. He also notes that the potential need for an additional 5 or 6 spaces will not be problematic due to the presence of a number of gable-ended properties. The car parking spaces created by these gable-ended properties are already in full demand and in regular use by local residents because we are unable to park outside, or next to, our own homes. These spaces in Wolseley Street are already in full use as an overflow for residents who live in Milman Street, Alice Street and Wolseley Street, and who cannot park near their own homes. There is certainly no additional capacity, as specified by the Highways officer, and his comment that 'any theoretical shortfall would be minimal' is untrue and we would like him to provide actual evidence to support this statement.

The Highways officer MUST include a condition for a full parking survey to be carried out as part of this application and he must determine and consider the potential maximum number of occupants of the proposed HMO as this could vary from 7 up to 14 people.

The increase in residents will exacerbate existing parking issues and traffic congestion in the area. The current infrastructure is not equipped to handle the additional demand, leading to potential safety hazards and inconvenience for existing residents.

The current excessive demand for parking in the area often leads to cars being parked in a way that they block drop kerbs and this causes inconvenience and personal safety risks for older residents who rely on wheelchairs, walkers or mobility scooters. We have a high number of older residents in the area and the traffic and parking problems lead to them being isolated in their homes, and put at serious risk and inconvenience when they venture outside.

The high density of parked cars creates safety concerns, particularly for children and vulnerable people, as there are often no places where roads can be crossed safely, with full visibility of the road, before proceeding to cross.

The lack of available spaces often causes some drivers to park dangerously, including parking across a junction which leads to obstruction and limited visibility for drivers trying to turn at a junction. The junctions at Milman Street and Wolseley Street, and Alice Street and Wolseley Street, are the most affected by this problem. There are some garages that face onto Wolseley Street and these garage access points are regularly blocked due to parked cars.

The applicant proposes that potential tenants can use an underused car parking area located nearby at Mendalgief Road, however, he cannot provide a guarantee that occupants of the HMO will park here. They will use any available parking spaces

that might be available at that time, and which are nearest to the HMO, therefore causing existing residents to have to park further afield and struggle with babies, children and shopping. The area on Mendalgief Road which has been mentioned as potential parking is not well lit during the night and without any homes along the road there is a high risk of car crime occurring.

The provision of bike storage facilities is a tick box exercise only and in reality it is very unlikely that its presence will persuade potential occupants to give up their cars before moving into the HMO and convert to using bicycle as their primary method of travel.

The nearby bus routes mentioned in the application are not fit for purpose. A reliable and convenient local bus service was removed from Pill a number of years ago. The buses run infrequently and there is no service on a Sunday at all.

The applicant states that 'there will be no issues relating to reductions in privacy, overbearing impact or overshadowing to nearby properties'. This is wholly untrue and a number of neighbouring properties will be severely affected by a lack of privacy due to this proposed development. The proposal includes upgrading and improving an existing balcony in order to create a patio area for occupants. Whilst this 'balcony' is existing, it is basically made up of some fencing around the perimeter on top of the existing flat roof extension. The previous occupant NEVER used this area as a balcony and the next door neighbour will verify that they have never seen this 'balcony' in use during the 20 or more years that they have lived there.

When in use this patio area will cause a significant loss of privacy for the neighbours who live in the adjacent houses on Milman Street and also to those homes that are located at the rear on Wolseley Street. Potential HMO occupants using this area will be able to directly overlook neighbours gardens and will be able see directly into bedroom and ground floor windows. In addition, the family who live in the house opposite to the garage will suffer from an invasion of privacy due to the proposed glazed first floor balcony on the front of the garage. Occupants in the first floor garage conversion will have a direct view of this family's rear garden and kitchen.

Therefore, many neighbours WILL be affected by a reduction in privacy which will severely affect their ability to enjoy their life and their home. The proposed patio and glazed balcony will lead to a feeling of being watched whilst in your home or garden which will lead to heightened stress and anxiety. The sense of being under scrutiny will affect mental health, well-being and peace of mind. Neighbours will suffer from a loss of comfort as this reduced privacy will make it harder to unwind and feel at ease in their own home.

The use of this area as a patio will also lead to increased light and noise pollution for

neighbours. The first floor patio area will need to be well lit which will inevitably cause light pollution to the adjacent gardens. It is also likely that this area will be used for social purposes and noise from occupants and the general use of the area will carry over to the neighbour's homes and gardens.

The next door neighbour also has serious security concerns as users of this patio can literally step directly into their garden and they are very concerned about security and the potential for trespassing.

The potential HMO, with an additional 7 to 14 residents, will result in increased noise levels due to the higher number of occupants. We currently live in a relatively quiet area and this 7 bed HMO will have a detrimental effect on the quality of life for existing residents, many of whom are elderly and families with children. This HMO will disrupt the peace and quiet of our residential neighbourhood, particularly during late hours.

The usual demographic of HMO occupants means that we face the potential of increased noise levels and disruption to our lives caused by frequent parties or loud music. With more people coming and going, the noise from footsteps and cars, doors opening and closing, and general movement can be constant and disruptive. Will pets be allowed? Multiple occupants with pets can lead to increased noise from barking dogs or other animals.

We are also concerned about the negative effects that will be caused during the construction phase of the proposed project, which is likely to cause severe problems over a prolonged period of time, including noise pollution, dust and debris, traffic congestion and increased parking issues, reduced access, vibration and structural damage, visual intrusion and safety concerns.

We feel that greed is the main driving factor for this proposed HMO, particularly the attempt at squeezing 7 bedrooms into what is currently a 3 bed family home. The property will be very overcrowded and this will significantly increase safety risks. With more people in a space, there are increased electrical loads and potentially more fire hazards like overloaded power sockets and blocked escape routes. More occupants can lead to inadequate ventilation, which can affect air quality and increase the risk of respiratory issues. Poor ventilation can also cause damp and mould issues which could affect the next door neighbour's property. Overcrowding can also lead to an increased risk of injury and spread of illness between occupants. More people means more frequent comings and goings, which will make it harder to maintain security and keep track of who is entering and leaving the house. Also, older buildings, such as the one in question, are not designed for high occupancy and can suffer structural damage due to increased load on floors and walls.

We note that a recommendation has been made by the NCC SAB team that the

applicant may need to complete a SAB application and we believe that it is crucial that this is enforced. Many of us, who have lived in our homes for more than 20 years, have encountered regular problems with our drains. We often have to pay local drain companies to come and jet our drains due to blockages which sometimes can cause a backup of sewerage in our homes. We have been advised that the problems are caused due to the inadequate and antiquated sewerage infrastructure in the street. We are very concerned that the proposed 7 bed HMO, with a number of kitchens, showers, toilets and sinks, will have a serious detrimental effect on the drains and sewerage system which will not be able to cope with additional effluent. Such problems will lead to deterioration in the quality of life for local residents and additional costs in having to call out drain companies to fix problems.

The applicant has specified that garden areas can be accessed by all of the residents and I dispute the quantity and quality of outdoor space that is being provided for occupants. With the additional proposed ground floor extension, bike storage facilities and bin and recycle storage area, I doubt that there will be any available usable outdoor space for occupants, especially when you consider there will be 7 to 14 occupants. The applicant has stated that bedroom 4 will benefit from a small front courtyard, however, the area is not, and could not be, a 'courtyard', and is in fact just a very narrow front garden area, that would not be exclusive to bedroom 4 in any way. The only useable outdoor space would be the proposed 'patio' area on the first floor and this only exacerbates all of the above mentioned concerns related to this patio.

There are already ongoing fly tipping issues in our local neighbourhood, which has been made worse by the change to 3 weekly collections for general waste. We are concerned about whether there is actually enough space within the perimeter of the property to contain a recycling and bin storage area that could accommodate the waste needs of 7 to 14 people. Poor waste management will cause unsanitary conditions for local residents and increase the presence of vermin such as rats. We foresee the occupants using the pavement outside the property as a storage area for recycling and waste bins and this will create unsanitary conditions, will block pavements and will prevent the use of the pavements by wheelchair and mobility scooter users, and those with pushchairs, causing them to use the busy roads instead. It will also adversely affect the image of the area and encourage fly tipping.

Milman Street already has its fair share of single and double person transient residents. We have a large block of flats on the corner with Alexandra Road and an existing registered HMO at 1 Milman Street. We also have potentially a further two properties that may be operating as unlicensed HMOs. There are sometimes problems with crime and drug and alcohol abuse related issues in some parts of the street, with the police often in attendance. Although the relationship between HMOs and crime rates is complex and can depend on various factors, we are concerned that some studies suggest that HMOs can be associated with higher crime rates due

to factors like higher population density, transient tenant populations, and potential for anti-social behaviour.

There is no indication of the type of demographic that will be housed in the potential HMO and whether the HMO is being created to provide homes for people with certain needs. There are real life examples of other HMOs in the Newport area that are used to house people with specific profiles and issues such as those that suffer from substance abuse, or high risk people such as violent offenders, sexual offenders or even paedophiles. The type of potential resident is a real concern for neighbours.

There are three primary schools nearby, St Andrews, St Michaels and Pillgwenlly primary schools and some local residents have raised this as a concern in relation to this proposed HMO in such close proximity to the schools.

The application and the comments from agencies consulted do not make any reference to the disruption of the bats that roost in the rear garage and are a regular sight around our homes and gardens. These bats have legal protection under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which make it illegal to deliberately harm, disturb, or destroy their habitats. We are concerned that the bats habitat will be destroyed and we insist that the legal and relevant action is taken to protect them.

In light of these concerns, we urge the Planning Department to refuse this application. The proposed HMO is not in the best interest of our community and will have a detrimental impact on the quality of life for existing residents.

Thank you for considering my objections.

Yours faithfully,

Local Residents

Date: 19th January 2025