

From: Thomas, Kate (Elected Member) <Kate.Thomas@newport.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 August 2026 12:44:50 UTC+01:00
To: "Cooke, Jacob (Senior Planning Officer)" <Jacob.Cooke@newport.gov.uk>
Subject: 26/0540 HMO Planning Application for 35 St Mary St HMO

Dear Officers,

Please find below my objection to the application at 35 St Mary St.

Elected members are united in feeling it is our duty to represent the best interests of the local populations in Newport. Being in touch with local opinion means representing their experience of living in streets where they see increasing the opportunistic greed and exploitation of single people needed desperate enough to consider such limited space and poor amenities. This is an inappropriate application because it proposes the irrevocable change to the use of a building, which with the former chapel next door, had, and continues to have a place at the heart of the Baneswell community. Clearly the chapel is no longer used for its original purpose but it now provides an important community facility for adults, vulnerable and young people in the area. The change of use to the neighbouring property 35 will potentially result in degradation to community cohesion of this close-knit historical area area of family homes.

There is an awareness that it has been proposed that the volunteers at the former chapel act act as key-issuers for the proposed HMO's new tenants. This is an extraordinary suggestion, which gives away their complete failure to be 'fit and proper' neighbours who understand the needs of some of that building's users requirements for privacy and confidentiality. Furthermore, this suggestion has the potential to compromise security of potential tenants at 35.

People in the local community are distressed that the creation of a further HMO on St Mary Street. With such a high concentration of tenants, it will mean those tenants may have less regard for maintaining decent standards and neighbourly behaviour. It is recognised that questions cannot be made about the tenants likely to be offered accommodation but sadly, there is a lack of accountability to legislative bodies to enforce the adequate management of tenant behaviour in HMOs by landlords and agents. Although it should be recognised that some HMOs are well managed, where few complaints arise, The situation here in Stow Hill is out of hand. This is at a time when we have seen enhanced publicity given to criminality in the city centre and citizens are blaming tenants for unruly behaviour. I make this point because current planning guidelines make no allowance for the individual circumstances and pressures upon distinct communities and their residents.

This is a small and oddly shaped historic building, formerly a Sunday School attached to the chapel. Although I note that the developer proposes that tenants have self contained shower and toilet facilities, which is unusual for similar applications, the bedroom measurements appear to incorporate the space of those provisions. Such small rooms do not give dignity to

adults, neither does this type of accommodation support physical or mental health. There is no explanation of the use proposed for the front basement floor room. Can officers be assured that this will not be developed into a further room to be let out?

The neighbouring property's objection has mentioned the extremely poor sound insulation. As with other applications, the developer should be required to state how much living space is to be lost to this installation. I would like to be informed of the grading needed. Also, this is an old building, constructed well before EPCs. What adaptations will be needed if the building is below D rating.

There would seem to be no outdoor space for relaxation or recreation at the property. As smoking will be prohibited indoors, what provision is to be made for potential tenants who smoke? If people smoke at the front of the building, where will they dispose of cigarette butts etc so that fly tipping is avoided?

The curbside parking immediately outside the building is unrestricted, probably allowing for 4 vehicles to park. These spaces are very well used by visitors and contractors but the rest of the street is permit-only for residents. Extra pressure for spaces from tenants here will create bad feeling. The number of car owners in HMOs may be lower but it is statistically very unlikely to be nil where there are 6 in residence, plus visitors or guests.

It is noted that a new storage areas for bins is to be provided however the council require bins, bags and boxes to be put in place before 7am so most residents put them in place the night before. The property has no front area for it's sole use so it is imperative that potential tenants or the landlord will protect the safety and appearance of the street and pavement so not to encourage rodent infestation. It should be understood that close by, at the top of Albert Street there have been frequent incidents of fly-tipping. If bins etc are not replaced at the rear of the property promptly it is likely to generate more mess and upset.

I request that Committee Members visit the site of this application to better appreciate the nature of the building and community there.

Yours faithfully,

Kate Thomas
Cllr Stow Hill