

## **4 March Planning Speaker Statements**

### **#6 - 25/04322/FUL 66 Ross Street – Cllr Dave Baigent**

I am deeply concerned that a balanced community such as Romsey (and Petersfield) could be challenged by an increase in 6 bed HMO's. I hope the planning committee will take account of local concerns when considering this and other similar applications.

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### **#6 - 25/04322/FUL 66 Ross Street – Cllr Dinah Pounds**

I wish to make an objection to this planning application on behalf of a large number of residents who have contacted me as their local councillor.

This is one of 7 applications for 6 bedroom HMOs from one developer in recent months within the Romsey conservation area and are major conversions on small, terraced Victorian houses. In addition there are 2 more applications in Petersfield close by. This application should therefore be considered not only by itself but in conjunction with the following-

- 25/04326/FUL-10 Ross Street
- 25/04668/FUL-160 Thoday Street
- 25/04864/FUL-86 Catherine Street
- 25/04667/FUL-98 Sedgwick Street
- 25/04836/FUL- Suez Road
- 25/04364/FUL-318 Mill Road
- 25/04323/FUL-78 Tenison Road
- 25/04327/FUL-16 Kingston Street

I have three main areas of objections.

1. This is a residential area for which the loss of family homes is impacting very adversely on residents. Policy 48 of our local plan requires that HMOs:
  - A. does not create an over-concentration of such a use in the local area, or cause harm to residential amenity or the surrounding area;

There is already a 7 bedroom HMO at number 27 Ross Street, plus numerous other multi-occupied rental properties and AirBnbs so the over-concentration created by this application particularly is doing exactly this. HMOs attract short-term lets creating dormitory areas and they destroy the sense of community that settled family homes bring to an area.

## **2. Local Plan Policy 48 also states that-**

B. The building or site (including any outbuildings) is suitable for use as housing in multiple occupation, with provision made, for example, for appropriate refuse and recycling storage, cycle and car parking and drying areas "would not create an over-concentration of such uses in the local area"

The accommodation these HMOs will provide does not meet standards we would expect for our residents. The rooms are too small and lack communal facilities, refuse and recycling facilities or car parking. The ugly extensions leave virtually no green outside space and reduce the biodiversity of this densely populated urban area even more.

## **2. Impact on neighbours is huge.**

The balance of these terraced houses is lost and neighbours are left with having to live in close proximity to overbearing, ugly extended buildings with loss of light and greenery. The streetscape has lost its character because the downstairs front room windows are papered over for use as bedrooms. Most houses in this area have either tiny or no front gardens. The front gardens of HMOs are paved over to accommodate numerous overflowing wheelie bins and where there is no front garden, bins are frequently just stored on the pavements.

Parking is also a serious problem. The area is already over-parked up as there is no residents' parking. There is permitted pavement parking so the pavements are only just over a metre wide. Dustbins left on the pavement cause a considerable hazard for parents with pushchairs and wheelchair users as they frequently have to travel in the road because the pavements are blocked.

The actual building works are causing distress because of the close proximity of the houses and they are so major in terms of changing the original design of the house. The builders have not shown themselves to be considerate. They frequently block pavements and roads by leaving vehicles, sometimes overnight on double yellow lines and trespass or leave building materials on neighbour's property. (Please see attached photo).



They have also commenced extensive building work before planning permission has been given.

### **3. Fire Brigade access.**

As local councillor, I have recently been contacted by our County Council fire officers regarding their concern over safety and access for fire engines because of the excessive amount of parking, often on double yellow lines and street corners. There is a serious concern about the safety of residents in this area. This large expansion of HMO accommodation and the inevitable increase in the number of people and cars trying to park in the area is only going to exacerbate this.

**In conclusion**

I have been the city councillor for Romsey for 5 years and have been closely involved with our Council Housing Policy, sitting on the Housing Scrutiny Cttee and Chairing it for two of those years. As a council we strive to provide good, suitable homes for our residents.

These HMO applications do not match our expectations for our residents. They provide extremely expensive short-term accommodation which is cramped and lacking communal and green space, parking or bike and refuse and recycling storage. If there is a need for shared accommodation it should be purpose-built and of a high standard. These applications do not meet these standards or help to provide much-needed social or affordable housing and they take away good, family homes which are needed by our residents.

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**#7 - 25/02831/FUL Land at Bateman Street - University of Cambridge**

The University fully supports and agrees with the conclusions and recommendation set out within the Officer's comprehensive report.

Members will recall that the application was previously considered by Committee on 2 December 2025, when it was deferred to enable consultation with Historic England and The Gardens Trust, and to allow the submission of an ecological survey. Both consultees have since been formally consulted and have confirmed that they do not wish to make any comments on the proposals. In addition, an ecological survey has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Ecology Officer, who has advised that sufficient information has been provided and raises no objection.

The condition of the existing access road has continued to deteriorate and is now unsatisfactory, presenting potential safety concerns, particularly as a result of the failure of the existing drainage system. The proposed replacement of the access road will provide a robust, long-term solution, delivering an improved surface and incorporating appropriate drainage infrastructure to address the current deficiencies.

Amendments have been made in response to feedback. Notably, the proposed trees along the boundary have been removed following concerns raised by local residents. Additional supporting information has also been submitted in line requests.

At the previous Committee meeting, Members discussed whether the replacement hedge should comprise solely a like-for-like yew hedge. It would not be feasible to plant a yew hedge at a height of 1.5 metres, as typical planting stock is generally between 80–100cm in height. Yew has an average growth rate of approximately 20–40cm per year, subject to site conditions, and would therefore take a considerable period to establish to the desired height. Furthermore, a mono-species yew hedge would represent a notable reduction in biodiversity value compared to the proposed mixed planting scheme.

The submitted scheme proposes a mix comprising 33.3% yew and 14.6% hornbeam, the latter being semi-evergreen and therefore contributing to year-round screening. In total, the hedge would comprise approximately 48% evergreen or semi-evergreen species. This approach was discussed with officers, who advised that, on balance, retaining the proposed mixed-species hedge would be preferable to a single-species alternative.

There are no objections from statutory or non-statutory consultees, and the proposal is considered to comply fully with relevant planning policy. The matters previously raised by Members have now been addressed. For these reasons, the University respectfully requests that Members support the Officer's recommendation and grant planning permission.