

1 July Planning Speaker Statements

#6 - 26/00797/FUL 1 Barton Close - Professor Karin Mogg

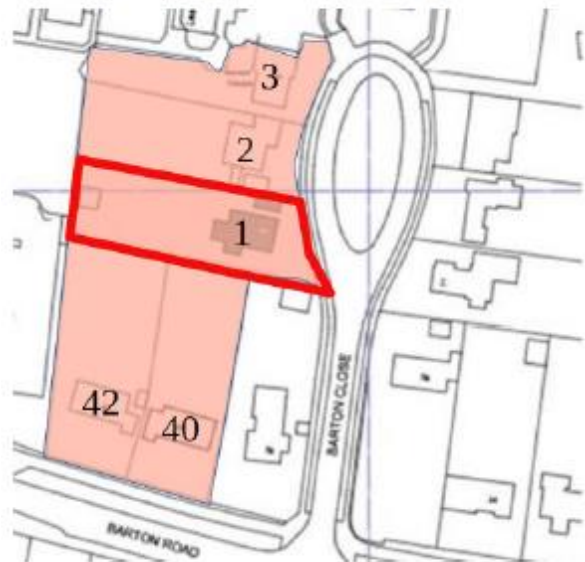
Upholding Policy 48 relating to HMO over-concentration.

Number 1 Barton Close is one of a cluster of five small HMOs that sandwich a family home (see location plan). Approving a large HMO here is inconsistent with Policy 48 preventing HMO over-concentration. While the Council cannot prevent over-concentration by small HMOs, it should not condone this by adding a large HMO, which it can control. Approval

would also set a precedent creating a cluster of large HMOs, because a similar planning application has been submitted for 40 Barton Road, and the college's neighbours have been warned that more will follow.

Recommendation: To refuse this application, in order to uphold the aim of Policy 48 and avoid setting a harmful precedent promoting large-HMO over-concentration locally and more widely in Cambridge.

Location plan: 1 Barton Close in HMO cluster



Upholding Policies 3 and 46 to prevent loss of family homes to student accommodation.

In the past, Policies 3 and 46 successfully prevented properties in this HMO cluster being changed to large student HMOs. Approval of this application would set a harmful precedent here and more widely in Cambridge, enabling landlords to evade these policies and convert a family home to large student HMO - simply by renting it for a few months to students as a small HMO, and suggesting it may be used by non-students in many years time (without evidence of when or if this might happen). While the Council cannot prevent violation of Policies 3 and 46 by small HMOs, it should prevent evasion of these policies for large HMOs. **Recommendation:** To refuse permission for a large HMO and prevent circumvention of Policies 3 and 46 here and elsewhere in Cambridge.

Occupancy rate. The planning report (point 19.5) recommends allowing up to 10 occupants, despite only 8 being requested. If similar permissions were to be granted to the four neighbouring HMOs, which are similar size, their combined maximum occupancy could rise from 30 to 50 residents – a *67% increase*, far greater than the estimated 3-resident increase (point 11.4). This would increase harm to residential amenity, *particularly if occupied by non-students in the future* (see below). **Recommendation:** To retain use as small HMO to prevent high total occupancy rate in HMO cluster.

Non-student occupancy. There are no "exceptional circumstances" to justify future HMO use by nonstudents. Moreover, non-student occupants are more likely to own cars, worsening parking and residential-amenity harm. As noted earlier, these problems will be further exacerbated by increased occupancy numbers in the HMO cluster. The college seems to recognise this issue because it agrees to "a named consent condition restricting occupation to Wolfson College students only" (College's Planning Statement, page 10, point 6.15). *This restriction should be enforced for the full duration of HMO use.*

Recommendation: To refuse use as large HMO for non-students, for which there is no housing justification and no evaluation of the residential-amenity harm caused by non-student occupants and how this might be managed.

Conclusion. A reasonable compromise between the needs of the college, local residents and planning considerations would be to continue using the property as a small HMO for students for as long as required by the college, after which it could be sold as a potential family home (which would not require planning permission). This would solve multiple planning challenges, prevent further harm to residential amenity, and avoid setting damaging precedents for the loss of family housing to student accommodation and the over-concentration of large HMOs, both locally and across Cambridge.