

# Comments for Planning Application 21/00463/CEU

## Application Summary

Application Number: 21/00463/CEU

Address: 105 Bulan Road Oxford Oxfordshire OX3 7HZ

Proposal: Application to certify that the existing use as a house in multiple occupation (Use Class C4) is lawful development.

Case Officer: Alice Watkins

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Robert Atwood

Address: 105 Bulan Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 7HZ

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Members of the Public

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- General dislike or support for proposal

Comment: Planning Application No 21/00463/CEU

I write in support of the application for a lawful development certificate in respect of the use of the property at 105 Bulan Road, Headington as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

### Description

The property is a semi-detached house, built in the 1960s of standard construction with a rendered finish, and painted white. There is a small flat roofed extension to the rear, extending the kitchen.

There is a small garden and driveway to the front of the house, a hard surfaced area to the side, and a small immature garden mostly to grass at the rear. The main entrance is to the side of the house. The adjoining property is currently owner occupied, and on the other side the neighbouring property is apparently let to students.

### Interior configuration - history

The property was originally designed as a three bed roomed "semi" with an upstairs bathroom, a kitchen/ reception room downstairs and an additional "front" living room.

When the current owner purchased the property in 1998 it had already been converted into a house for multiple occupants by reconfiguring the upstairs bathroom as a fourth bedroom, installing a bathroom downstairs, and extending the kitchen. The date of conversion is not known,

but it had probably been converted some time in the 1980s - if not before.

During the 2010s the property has been leased to housing associations / charities, and further reconfigurations have taken place; an additional space downstairs has been converted into a shower room and then re-converted into a toilet with basin, in line with the needs of the lessees to whom the house has been let, and the kitchen area has been extended into the reception making this a more integrated space. Other alterations were made as needed to comply with relevant regulations.

At the present day, therefore, the house is configured specifically for multiple occupation. Considerable expenditure would be required to re-configure it as a family home.

### Usage - history

From 1998 to 2010 the house has been let almost continuously for student accommodation, housing four or five students at a time.

In 2010 the property was leased to the Bournemouth Housing Association as an HMO, and subsequently at the end of the five year period to Home Group Limited. Both these organisations had arrangements with the Local Authorities to accommodate people with specific housing needs, including young people and those with mental illness or other problems. In both cases the lease terms required the lessees to ensure that all regulations, conditions and legal requirements local or otherwise were fully complied with, although it seems that the Article 4 direction made by OCC in 2012 may have been overlooked.

The property was, at all times used as an HMO housing either 4 people in the upstairs rooms, or 5 people by reconfiguring the downstairs "front" room as a bedroom.

The lease with Home Group ended at the end of November 2020, and since then the property has been in process of being completely redecorated, re-carpeted, repaired and restored, but retaining its configuration as an HMO as has been the case since at least the 1980s if not earlier. That process is taking longer than anticipated due to the COVID situation, but the owner is now in negotiation with another charity for the property's continuous use as an HMO, in this case for former homeless people in transition to independent living.

### Planning

Application is now being made for a Lawful Development Certificate for the property's existing use as a House in Multiple Occupation. With one or two short breaks, the property has been in use as such since the 1980s and has been in continuous use by Housing Association / charities as an HMO since 2010, and subject to planning will continue in use as such.

Conversion of the property back to a family home would be likely to be uneconomical and commercially unviable, and would deprive the City of a valuable housing resource. It is considered that the current and proposed use of the property as an HMO fills a very specialised housing need and assists in reducing the number of rough sleepers and in reducing the suffering of disadvantaged or unwell residents in the local and surrounding areas.

Robert Atwood FCA