



APP/D1780/W/22/3294060

Planning Appeal 61 Highfield Crescent, Southampton, SO17 1SG

Highfield Residents' Association

The Appeal against the refusal by Southampton City Council Planning Department of the Planning Application to further extend the semi-detached HMO dwelling at 61, Highfield Crescent, Southampton, SO17 1SG, is objected to by Highfield Residents' Association.

Highfield Crescent is an established residential area that is struggling to meet the different demands of ordinary family housing with high density, predominantly student occupied Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodation. Late night student disturbances are already a feature of the locality, bins clutter front gardens and the street view is no longer attractive.

In the case of 61, Highfield Crescent, SCC Planning had offered a preapplication planning service and worked with the applicant (Ref: Appellant's Statement submitted for the Appeal). Although the application (Ref: 21/01329/FUL) was initially recommended for conditional consent by the planning officer, when the full case was discussed at the Southampton City Council Planning Committee Meeting on 25th January 2022, additional significant factors were considered.

Highfield Residents' Association highlighted some of these additional factors in their initial objection to the Planning Application. The most significant of which is HMO over-density. The dwelling already has a current licence as an HMO semi-detached property and sought to make roof alterations, including installation of side dormer and roof lights, to facilitate a loft conversion and change of use from 5-bed HMO (class C4) to large 7-bed HMO (Sui Generis use).

Southampton City Council Local Plan Review (Amended 2015), supported by the relevant sections of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (Approved May 2016, Ref: attachment) requires application of, "... a consistent 10% threshold throughout the city and a 40m radius for approval of new HMOs," (Ref: p.3 1.5; p.4 1.1 Policy text).

It remains HRA's view that the building proposals would be a gross overdevelopment of a semi-detached house. The build would be out of scale and would dominate adjoining properties, affecting their visual amenity as the new building roof line and loft conversion would dominate the street scene in all dimensions. However, although the original Planning Application concerned extending into the roof, the effect was to increase the size of an HMO, adding a further two tenants to the immediate area.

Southampton City Council publishes a Public Register of Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation, (Ref: 16/06/29022) : <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/media/1dkb4e24/hmo-licensing-public-register-160622.pdf>

Currently, there are 9 licensed HMO properties in Highfield Crescent. This represents over 20% of dwellings. 54 tenant places are on this register.

When the original Planning Application was discussed at the Planning Panel on 25 January 2022, the panel carefully considered all aspects of the application and also wider consequences. Whether the application was refused by casting vote is not relevant. The Refusal Decision Statement clearly highlights the negative impact on the intensification of occupation for an enlarged HMO, referenced in its own SPD, as being the most significant factor in refusing planning permission.

HRA had argued this in its original objection and considers this to be the most important reason for dismissing the Appeal.

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