

Planning appeal against the decision to refuse permission for Change of Use from Class C3 Dwelling to Class C4 house in multiple occupation (in retrospect) at 31 Watery Road, Wrexham LL13 7NP

WRO P/2021/1051

The planning application was refused by Wrexham County Borough Council on 10 January 2022 for the following reasons;

1. The proposed development will result in an over concentration of HMOs within the immediate area of the site contrary to Policy H4 (d) of the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan and Local Planning Guidance Note No. 5 'Conversion of Dwellings into Houses in Multiple Occupation' which sets out a maximum of 10% HMOs within a 50 metre radius of the site.
2. The development will give rise to an increase in demand for on-street parking in the vicinity of the site, exacerbating existing parking problems to the detriment of highway safety and residential amenity. The proposals therefore conflict with policy T8 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

We wish to appeal against this decision for the reasons below;

1. Prior to purchasing this property we sought pre-application advice from Wrexham CBC who concluded that they would support a planning application. Their response on this point was as follows:

At present just over 12% of the residential properties in the immediate vicinity are currently in use as HMOs. This would increase to just under 15% if no.31 Watery Road is converted to a HMO. However this part of Watery Road is not primarily residential in character with the Island Green shopping centre being located opposite and other commercial premises a short distance away. The site is also in a sustainable location being on the edge of the town centre and with the bus station and two railway stations close by. The proposed change of use is, in my opinion, unlikely to be significantly prejudicial to the character of the immediate locality. It is also in an area where a modest increase in population density would not be unacceptable.

I have attached a full copy of the pre-planning advice however we have requested more recent information from Wrexham Council and the figure has reduced slightly. The response from our enquiry is as follows;

We have access to a GIS mapping system where I can call up a map to identify existing licensed HMOs. When we were dealing with the application on 31 Watery Road I identified 4 existing HMOs as being within 50 metres:

*11, 21 and 23 Bradley Road
36 Jubilee Road.*

Including no.31, there are 41 residential properties within 50 metres which therefore gives the 10% as existing (i.e. if no.31 is not a HMO) and 12% if no.31 is allowed to remain a HMO.

With the property being an end of terrace house we feel there is less risk of upsetting potential family homes either side.

2. As a 3/4 bedroom dwelling previously, parking would have always been an issue at the property, as per Wrexham Council's Parking standards (attached) which state for a 3 / 4 bedroom dwelling there should be 3 car spaces. In our experience as HMO landlords and the location of our properties we find our tenants rarely own a vehicle so feel parking is less of an issue than if a family of 4 were living there. The planning department also agree that tenants are less likely to own a car. Parking does seem to be an issue on this road but our own research shows this is due to workers in Wrexham using it as free parking during the day not the residents. The property does have a small driveway which we understand does not meet size requirements but is more than adequate for a mid-sized car and a garage which we would be happy to improve if required to reduce congestion.