

Application Number: DM/2025/00783

Proposal: Change of use of specific internal areas of the existing hotel (Use Class C1) to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) comprising 9 bedrooms for occupation by up to 15 persons, including minor internal alterations. No alterations or works are proposed to the exterior of the building.

Address: Greenman Backpackers, 13 Beaufort Square, Chepstow, NP16 5EP

Applicant: Diego Spahiu

Plans: Location Plan, 1863-01, 1863-02, 1863-03A, Cycle Shelter Assembly Instructions, GIS by AFGUK Architects

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Case Officer: David Wong

Date Valid: 17.06.2025

This application is presented to Planning Committee due to an objection being received from Chepstow Town Council

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 Site Description

This application relates to a premises in the Central Shopping Area (LDP Policy RET2) of Chepstow. Raglan Lodge (aka Greenman Backpackers) is a Grade II* listed building and is within the Chepstow Conservation Area (LDP Policy HE1). In 2011, planning permission was granted for a change of use of a social club/retail into a 'Backpacker Hotel'.

The application site is located in the town centre of Chepstow, which is within the development boundary (LDP Policy H1 applies) and within the Central Shopping Area as identified by the Proposals Map of the LDP. The site is within a Cadw Historic Landscape, adjacent to a number of listed buildings and within an Area of Archeological Sensitivity (ASA).

1.2 Ecological Value Added

A Green Infrastructure Statement has been submitted. Two bird boxes are proposed on external boundary features, which is proportional to the scale of the proposals. A condition is recommended to secure the measures for net benefit.

1.3 Proposal Description

This application is seeking full planning permission for a change of use from a hotel / guest house use (Use Class C1) to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), comprising 9 bedrooms for occupation by up to 15 persons, including minor internal alterations. No alterations or works are proposed to the exterior of the building. At the rear of the property is a two-storey annexe. It is proposed that this annexe will be reinstated to its former use as a self-contained dwelling, which is subject to a separate planning application. An on-site provision of three parking spaces, along with dedicated refuse and cycle storage, will be provided at the rear of the site.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (if any)

Reference Number	Description	Decision	Decision Date
DM/2025/00783	Change of use of specific internal areas of the existing hotel (Use Class C1) to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) comprising 9 bedrooms for occupation by up to 15 persons, including minor internal alterations. No alterations or works are proposed to the exterior of the building.	Pending Determination	
DM/2025/00784	Change of use of specific internal areas of the existing hotel (Use Class C1) to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) comprising 9 bedrooms for occupation by up to 15 persons, including minor internal alterations. No alterations or works are proposed to the exterior of the building (Listed Building Consent).	Pending Consideration	
DC/2016/00916	Change of use of the lower ground floor to A3. Retention of gates facing Beaufort Square.	Approved	26.10.2016
DC/1975/00626	INTERN.ILLUM.PROJECT.BOX Sign APP_TYP 01 = Full MAP_REF = 353000193000	Refused	12.11.1975
DC/1985/00841	Demolition Of Wall At Rear.	Approved	03.04.1986

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S1 LDP The Spatial Distribution of New Housing Provision
 S4 LDP Affordable Housing Provision
 S13 LDP Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
 S16 LDP Transport
 S17 LDP Place Making and Design

Development Management Policies

DES1 LDP General Design Considerations
 EP1 LDP Amenity and Environmental Protection
 H1 LDP Residential Development in Main Towns, Severnside Settlements and Rural Secondary Settlements
 H9 LDP Flat Conversions
 HE1 LDP Development in Conservation Areas
 MV1 LDP Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations
 NE1 LDP Nature Conservation and Development
 RET2 LDP Central Shopping Areas

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Future Wales - the national plan 2040

Future Wales is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities. Future Wales - the national plan 2040 is the national development framework and it is the highest tier plan, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a framework which will be built on by Strategic Development Plans at a regional level and Local Development Plans. Planning decisions at every level of the planning system in Wales must be taken in accordance with the development plan as a whole.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty.

A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places. PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities.

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 Consultation Replies

Chepstow Town Council - Recommends refusal for the following reason(s):

1. That the proposal is not in keeping with the historical nature of the town.
2. That the proposal is an overdevelopment of the site for this type of accommodation and would prefer to see tourist accommodation.

MCC Highways - No response to date.

Natural Resources Wales - No objection to the proposed development as submitted. Please consult your in-house ecologist regarding the need for any further ecological information in support of this application.

MCC Heritage Management - No objection to the proposed change of use of the building and the concurrent Listed Building Consent is acceptable.

MCC Biodiversity & Ecology - No objection subject to condition(s). The exterior of the building will remain as existing and interior works will not impact on any loft spaces or dark, undisturbed voids. An ecological survey is therefore not required as there is negligible risk to protected species. In terms of biodiversity net gain measures, two bird boxes are proposed on external boundary features, which is proportional to the scale of the proposals.

MCC Environmental Health - No response to date.

5.2 Neighbour Notification

One comment neither objecting nor supporting the application: We do not want Chepstow to be overrun with HMO accommodation in the centre. I would be interested to know what percentage of accommodation units are for HMOs and what percentage is desirable for a thriving tourist town. I

would urge a delay in determining this and any other planning applications until this strategy has been properly assessed.

5.3 Other Representations

None.

5.4 Local Member Representations

None.

Please note all representations can be read in full on the Council's website:

<https://planningonline.monmouthshire.gov.uk/online-applications/?lang=EN>

6.0 EVALUATION

6.1 Principle of Development

6.1.1 There is no specific policy within the adopted Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP) that focuses on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). However, an HMO is a type of housing and is classified under the Use Class Order as Use Class C4.

6.1.2 LDP Policy S1 set out the strategic aim for the authority in relation to housing delivery and states; "The main focus for new housing development is within or adjoining the Main Towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth". Additionally, LDP Policy H1 relates to residential development within the Main Towns and states; "Development boundaries have been drawn for the Main Towns, Severnside Settlements and Rural Secondary Settlements identified in Policy S1, within which new build residential development / redevelopment or conversion to residential, or subdivision of large dwellings or reuse of accommodation such as upper vacant floors in town centres will be permitted subject to detailed planning considerations and other policies of the LDP that seek to protect existing retail, employment and community uses".

6.1.3 LDP Policy H9 relates specifically to flat conversions and lists a number of criteria for proposals to be considered against which are assessed below. In conclusion, there is no objection in principle to the proposed HMO units within the settlement boundary for Chepstow.

6.2 Protection of the Central Shopping Area

6.2.1 The site is within the Central Shopping Area (LDP Policy RET2 refers). The purpose of the retail policies are to protect and enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the County's main town centres by allowing use classes A1, A2 and A3 and other uses appropriate to town centres - these policies are primarily aimed at the ground floor of the premises.

6.2.2 Proposals will be supported provided that they will:

- a) will safeguard the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the defined CSAs will be permitted;
- b) a change of use from Classes A1, A2 or A3 on the ground floor with street frontage to uses other than Classes A1, A2 or A3 will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that criterion (a) can be met by attracting footfall;
- c) change of use to residential of ground floor premises will not be permitted unless evidence is provided to demonstrate that the premises is not viable for retail or commercial use, including that the premises has been vacant for at least one year and that genuine attempts at marketing the existing use have been unsuccessful.

6.2.3 Given that the premises already fall outside the recommended use classes (A1, A2, and A3), a relaxation of the policy is considered justified and appropriate in this case.

6.2.4 The proposed HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) will provide shared accommodation that meets the growing local demand for flexible and affordable housing. It could accommodate a diverse range of occupants, including young professionals, key workers, and others who may not have access to traditional housing options.

6.2.5 The application explains that the hotel has experienced a significant and sustained decline in demand for its backpacker-style accommodation since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This downturn ultimately led to its permanent closure two years ago due to lack of demand and

financial unsustainability. Reconfiguring this part of the building into an HMO would make effective use of underutilised space while contributing to the sustainability and vitality of the local housing market.

6.2.6 The result of this application would bring a vacant and deteriorating part of the building back into active and beneficial use, supporting the long-term conservation and sustainable use of this heritage asset, in accordance with both national and local planning and heritage policies.

6.3 Historic Environment/Design

6.3.1 The premises in question is a Grade II* listed building, located within the Chepstow Conservation Area and in close proximity to numerous other listed buildings. This application relates solely to the proposed change of use to create nine HMO units; no external design changes are included. As the premises is a Grade II* listed building, the planning application is accompanied by an application for Listed Building Consent. No alterations to the external fabric are proposed, ensuring that the character and appearance of this part of the Chepstow Conservation Area will remain unaffected. The Council's Heritage Management team has confirmed that there is no objection to the proposed change of use or the internal alterations. Accordingly, the proposal complies with LDP Policy HE1.

6.3.2 Heneb (formerly the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust) noted that there are no alterations or works proposed to the exterior of the building. It is also noted that the proposed works are for minor internal alterations and to areas that have previously been modified using modern materials. Consequently, due to its limited scale and that there will be no extensive groundworks or disturbance, it is considered unlikely that significant archaeological remains and earlier features will be encountered. Therefore, no further information was required in relation to this element.

6.4 Impact on Amenity

6.4.1 The proposed change of use from hotel accommodation to an HMO within the town centre is not expected to have any unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents. While the proposed HMO use (Use Class C4) falls under a different use class than the existing hotel / backpackers use (Use Class C1), both share a similar residential character. Importantly, no additional windows are proposed, ensuring that the privacy of adjacent residential properties is maintained. Therefore, no issues of overlooking or loss of privacy are anticipated. The proposal is considered to comply with LDP Policy EP1.

6.5 Parking / Highway

6.5.1 There are currently two double beds accommodating four persons, with a combination of bunk beds and single beds in the remaining rooms accommodating a further 31 persons. The existing backpackers' hotel therefore comprises a mix of double, single, and bunk beds, providing accommodation for a total of 35 persons. The proposed change of use would create nine bedrooms accommodating up to 15 persons, which is significantly fewer than the current capacity. In addition, three on-site parking spaces are proposed to serve the new units.

6.5.2 The site is located within Chepstow town centre and does include three designated on-site parking spaces at the rear of the site. While Highways have not provided a response to this application, it is considered that given the site's central location, future occupiers will benefit from excellent access to local amenities and sustainable transport options. Public transport provision in the town centre is considered good, with frequent bus services and there is convenient access to Chepstow train station. Consequently, there are no significant concerns regarding the sustainability of the site. In terms of visitor or private vehicle parking, the property is situated adjacent to one of the largest public car parks in Chepstow, which can accommodate any anticipated parking requirements. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with LDP Policy MV1 and this approach is consistent with the placemaking principles set out in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).

6.5.3 To promote sustainable travel, secure and covered cycle parking for 15 bicycles will be provided within the rear garden area. The site also benefits from additional outdoor amenity space at the rear, which would accommodate discreet refuse and recycling storage, ensuring these facilities are contained within the site and do not detract from the wider character of the area.

6.6 Biodiversity Net gain

6.6.1 There is no objection from NRW. The Council's Biodiversity & Ecology team advised that because the exterior of the building will remain as existing and interior works will not impact on any loft spaces or dark, undisturbed voids, an ecological survey would not be required, there being negligible risk to protected species.

6.6.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 12 sets out that "planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. Policies NE1 and GI1 seek to ensure that green infrastructure (GI) is protected, enhanced and the effects of climate change mitigated, such requirements accord with policy and guidance within Future Wales 2040 and Planning Policy Wales. A GI Statement has been submitted, identifying two bird boxes to be proposed on external boundary features, which is proportionate to the scale of the proposals. A condition is recommended to secure the measures for net benefit. Bird boxes will need to be sited at least 2m above ground level and out of the reach of predators such as cats (e.g. away from ledges). Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with LDP Policy NE1.

6.7 Foul Drainage

6.7.1 Welsh Water noted that the application relies on existing sewer connections and no new connections are to be made with the public sewerage system. Nonetheless, for the avoidance of doubt, if the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning consent, no surface water from any increase in the roof area of the building /or impermeable surfaces within its curtilage will be allowed to drain directly or indirectly to the public sewerage system. In this case, no new extension or hardstanding is proposed. Therefore, no issue of this kind is anticipated. In order to prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment, the condition requested in relation to surface water will be imposed.

6.8 Affordable Housing Financial Contribution

In accordance with Policy S4 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan and the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), proposals for residential development are required to make an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing provision. While an HMO is classified as a form of residential use, it does not fall within the definition of self-contained dwellings. HMOs provide shared accommodation that meets the growing local demand for flexible and affordable housing. The adopted SPG does not require HMOs to make an Affordable Housing Financial Contribution, and therefore no contribution is applicable in this instance.

6.9 Response to other matters raised by the Town Council and/or Third Parties

6.9.1 One comment was received wherein the respondent expressed concern about the potential for Chepstow town centre to become dominated by HMO accommodation. They requested information on the current percentage of accommodation units that are HMOs and what proportion would be considered appropriate for a thriving tourist town. They also suggested delaying the determination of this and similar applications until a clear strategy has been developed and assessed.

6.9.2 There is currently no planning policy within the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) that sets a threshold for the proportion of HMOs in Monmouthshire. As such, each application is assessed on its own merits. The site in question is located within Chepstow town centre, which is defined as a sustainable location where forms of residential use are generally supported. The proposal has been fully assessed, and no material harm has been identified in relation to amenity, heritage, or other planning considerations. Therefore, there is no substantive reason to withhold planning permission in this instance.

6.9.3 Chepstow Town Council has recommended refusal on the grounds that the proposal is not considered to be in keeping with the historic character of the town. The Council also expressed concern that the development represents an overprovision of this type of accommodation and indicated a preference for the site to be retained for tourist accommodation instead.

6.9.4 The concerns raised by Chepstow Town Council have been noted. However, as set out earlier, there is currently no policy within the adopted LDP that restricts or sets a threshold for the level of HMO accommodation within Monmouthshire. Each application must therefore be assessed on its own merits.

6.9.5 The application site is located within Chepstow town centre, which is defined as a sustainable location where residential uses are generally supported. The proposed change of use will bring a vacant listed building back into beneficial use, contributing positively to the vitality of the town centre. The proposal has been assessed against all relevant planning considerations, including heritage, amenity, and transport, and no material harm has been identified.

6.9.6 While the Town Council has expressed a preference for tourist accommodation, planning decisions must be based on adopted policy and material considerations. There is no policy requirement to prioritise tourist accommodation over the HMO use proposed in this location. Furthermore, the proposed HMO use is compatible with the surrounding mixed-use character of the town centre. Accordingly, there is no substantive planning reason to withhold permission in this instance.

7.0 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

7.1 The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales has been considered, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WBFG Act). In reaching this recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been taken into account and it is considered that this recommendation is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 An HMO is a form of residential use. The site is located within the Chepstow Town Development Boundary within which both Policy S1 and H1 presume in favour of the principle of new residential development. The principle of development in this location is acceptable in policy terms and accords with the key objective of PPW12 by providing residential accommodation in sustainable locations. PPW states that proposals for housing within settlements should be supported where they accord with the national sustainable placemaking outcomes.

8.2 The proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on residential amenity, in accordance with policies DES1 and EP1 of the LDP. No significant external alterations are proposed, ensuring that the character and appearance of this part of the Chepstow Conservation Area will be preserved. The site occupies a sustainable location within the town centre, with excellent access to local amenities and public transport, all within walking distance. Accordingly, the proposal complies with Policy MV1 of the LDP.

8.3 There is no ecological objection from the Council's Ecologist, and biodiversity enhancements are included as part of the scheme, ensuring compliance with Policy NE1 of the LDP. Overall, the proposal is fully policy-compliant and aligns with the objectives of Planning PPW and the adopted LDP.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

1 This development shall be begun within 5 years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the list of approved plans set out in the table below.

REASON: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings, for the avoidance of doubt.

3 No surface water from any increase in the roof area of the building /or impermeable surfaces within its curtilage shall be allowed to drain directly or indirectly to the public sewerage

system.

REASON: To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment.

4 All works shall proceed in accordance with the Green Infrastructure Statement by AFGUK Architects including installation of two bird boxes in suitable locations. Evidence of implementation of all measures to achieve net benefit for biodiversity must be provided to the Local Planning Authority no more than three months later than the first beneficial use of the development.

REASON: To provide biodiversity net benefit and ensure compliance with PPW 12, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and LDP policy NE1.

INFORMATIVES

1 Due to the minor nature of the proposed development (including any demolition) and the location of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposals did not need to be screened under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

2 NRW Informative:

We advise the applicant that, in addition to planning permission, it is their responsibility to ensure they secure all other permits/consents/licences relevant to their development. Please refer to our website for further details.

3 DCWW Advisory Note:

The planning permission hereby granted does not extend any rights to carry out any works to the public sewerage or water supply systems without first having obtained the necessary permissions required by the Water Industries Act 1991. Any alterations to existing premises resulting in the creation of additional premises or merging of existing premises must also be constructed so that

each is separately connected to the Company's water main and can be separately metered. Please contact our new connections team on 0800 917 2652 for further information on water and sewerage connections.

The applicant is also advised that some public sewers and lateral drains may not be recorded on our maps of public sewers because they were originally privately owned and were transferred into public ownership by nature of the Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011. The presence of such assets may affect the proposal. In order to assist us in dealing with the proposal the applicant may contact Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to establish the location and status of the apparatus. Under the Water Industry Act 1991 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has rights of access to its apparatus at all times.

In accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and Technical Advice Note 12 (Design), the applicant is advised to take a sustainable approach in considering water supply in new development proposals, including utilising approaches that improve water efficiency and reduce water consumption. We would recommend that the applicant liaises with the relevant Local Authority Building Control department to discuss their water efficiency requirements.

Our response is based on the information provided by your application. Should the proposal alter during the course of the application process we kindly request that we are re-consulted and reserve the right to make new representation.

If you have any queries please contact the undersigned on 0800 917 2652 or via email at developer.services@dwrcymru.com

Please quote our reference number in all communications and correspondence.

4 Please note that Bats are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This protection includes bats and places used as bat roosts, whether a bat is present at the time or not. If bats are found during the course of works, all works must cease and Natural Resources Wales contacted immediately. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) (0300 065 3000).

5 All birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The protection also covers their nests and eggs. To avoid breaking the law, do not carry out work on trees, hedgerows or buildings where birds are nesting. The nesting season for most birds is between March and September.

6 Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust's record is not definitive in the area of the proposal and features may be disturbed during the course of the work. In this event, please contact the Trust on 01792 655208.