
PLANNING STATEMENT

Use of existing house
as children's home

2 Wimborne Avenue,
Hayes,
UB4 0HG

Contents

1. Site Description
2. Proposal
3. History
4. Policies
5. Consideration of case
6. Conclusion

1. Site Description

The application property is a two-storey dwelling house located on the north-western side of Wimborne Avenue. The existing use falls within Use Class C3 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order. The surrounding area is a residential in character.

There is no direct policy constraint on the site as identified in the Council's proposal map.

2. Proposal

Planning permission is sought for use of the existing dwelling house C3(a) as a children's care home C2 for no more than 4 residents (age 9 to 17 years) living together as a single household where care is provided for the residents.

The home will be staffed on a 24hr basis to adequately support the residents. There would be a minimum of two staff during the night.

No external alterations are proposed.

3. History

The relevant planning decisions on the site are:

- 70262/APP/2022/2942: Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to residential home for up to 6 residents living together as a single household (Use Class C3b) (Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed Use). Granted
- 70262/APP/2020/3310: Conversion of roofspace to habitable use to include a rear dormer, 3 front rooflights and conversion of roof from hip to gable end (Application for a Certificate of Lawful Development for a Proposed Development). Approved.

- 70262/APP/2020/2877: Single storey rear extension with alterations to fenestration. Refused.
- 70262/APP/2020/2708: Conversion of roof space to habitable use to include a rear dormer, 3 front rooflights and conversion of roof from hip to gable end (Application for a Certificate of Lawful Development for a Proposed Development).
- 70262/APP/2020/1875: Part two storey, part single storey side and rear extension. Refused.
- 70262/APP/2018/3974: Part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension. Refused.
- 70262/APP/2018/1499: Part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension. Refused
- 70262/APP/2017/4100: Part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension. Approved
- 70262/APP/2017/2854: Part two storey, part single storey side extension and single storey rear extension. Refused
- 70262/APP/2014/4525: Part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension involving conversion of roofspace to habitable use to include a rear dormer, 1 front rooflight and 1 side rooflight. Approved
- 70262/APP/2014/4524: Single storey rear extension. Approved.
- 70262/APP/2014/3075: Single storey rear extension. Refused.
- 70262/APP/2014/3069: Two storey, 3-bed attached dwelling involving part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension. Refused.

4. Policies

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Policies

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

London Plan

- Policy H12 Supported and specialised accommodation
- Policy D5 (2021) Inclusive design

Local Plan

- PT1.BE1 (2012) Built Environment
- DMEI 10 - Water Management, Efficiency and Quality
- DMH 1 - Safeguarding Existing Housing
- DMH 4 - Residential Conversions and Redevelopment
- DMH 8 - Sheltered Housing and Care Homes
- DMHB 11 - Design of New Development
- DMHB 15 - Planning for Safer Places
- DMHB 16 - Housing Standards
- DMHB 18 - Private Outdoor Amenity Space
- DMT 1 - Managing Transport Impacts
- DMT 2 - Highways Impacts
- DMT 6 - Vehicle Parking

5. Consideration of case

The main issues are as follows:

- Acceptability in principle
- Impact on the character of the area
- Impact on the amenities of the adjoining occupiers of the site
- Transport

Acceptability of the proposal in principle

Chapter 8 of the NPPF 2023 'Promoting healthy and safe communities states that: "b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community; and: e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services."

Policy H12 of the London Plan (Supported and specialised accommodation) states: "The delivery, retention and refurbishment of supported and specialised housing which meets an identified need should be supported. The form this takes will vary, and it should be designed to satisfy the requirements of the specific use or group it is intended for, whilst providing options within the accommodation offer for the diversity of London's population, including disabled Londoners (see Policy D7 Accessible housing) within a wider inclusive community setting. Boroughs should undertake assessments of the need for short-term, medium-term and permanent supported and specialised accommodation within their borough. Supported and specialised accommodation could include:

- 1) Accommodation for people leaving hostels, refuges and other supported housing, as well as care leavers and people leaving prison to enable them to live independently
- 2) Accommodation for young people with support needs
- 3) Reablement accommodation (intensive short-term) for people who are ready to be discharged from hospital but who require additional support to be able to return

safely to live independently at home, or to move into appropriate long-term accommodation.

- 4) Accommodation for disabled people (including people with physical and sensory impairments and learning difficulties) who require additional support or for whom living independently is not possible.
- 5) Accommodation (short-term or long-term) for people with mental health issues who require intensive support.
- 6) Accommodation for rough sleepers.
- 7) Accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.
- 8) Accommodation for victims of violence against women and girls”

Policy DM9 Specialised Housing states that: “A) The Council will support development of specialised housing provided that the development: i) Does not result in the 'unjustified' loss of a larger family home; ii) Does not lead to an over concentration of related uses in an area, judged by effects on parking, transport, amenity space and retail, education and health and welfare services; iii) Meets an identified borough need.”

Policy DMH 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) states that: “The net loss of existing self-contained housing, including affordable housing, will be resisted unless the housing is replaced with at least equivalent residential floorspace”.

With regards to Sheltered Housing and Care Homes, Policy DMH 8 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) states:

“ A) The development of residential care homes and other types of supported housing will be permitted provided that:

- i) it would not lead to an over concentration of similar uses detrimental to residential character or amenity and complies with Policy DMH 4: Residential Conversions;
- ii) it caters for need identified in the Council's Housing Market Assessment, in a needs assessment of a recognised public body, or within an appropriate needs assessment and is deemed to be responding to the needs identified by the Council or other recognised public body such as the Mental Health Trust;
- iii) the accommodation is fully integrated into the residential surroundings; and

iv) in the case of sheltered housing, it is located near to shops and community facilities and is easily accessible by public transport.

B) Proposals for residential care establishments which fall under Use Class C2 must demonstrate that they would provide levels of care as defined in Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)".

The application premises is lawfully C3 (Dwelling Houses). The intended use would fall under C2 (Residential Institutions).

The proposal entails the use of the property as a home for 4 children from age 9 up to the age of 17 who have emotional behavioural difficulties, living with professional care personnel, who would be operating on shifts so that there would be 24-hour cover thus forming a "living household".

Government policy is to reduce the use of out-of-borough placements and residential care. Under the Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, accommodation provided by local authorities for looked after children must be within the local authority's area unless this is not reasonably practicable. There is overwhelming evidence of concerns raised on looked after children who are put on 'out of the borough' placements because of a lack of suitable provision closer to home. These children feel trauma and isolation, and often do not see loved ones often enough when placed out of area.

There is a need to provide more local placement opportunities for looked after children, rather than 'out of the borough' placements. The priority is to have sufficient residential care accommodation within Hillingdon to meet the needs of the children in the borough.

The applicant is an Ofsted registered specialist provider for children with special needs and it already operates multiple facilities with proven experience and track record across the country. It prides itself in offering a bespoke package for each young person, supporting them to reach their full potential with regards to education and their future aspirations with respect to a career or further education, and on offering a safe environment to call home for the children.

The property is well equipped and laid out to provide a high standard of living arrangements that can provide the children with independence but at the same time the children have the safety net and benefits of staff care and support available 24/7 as needed within the property. The site is also well located to provide the children with non-car means to local amenities and public transport.

The proposal would result in the loss of the existing single dwellinghouse. However, it is evident that there is a compelling case for the proposed residential children's home which would offer significant benefits to the local communities and families. Such significant benefits would outweigh the limited harm caused by the loss of the dwelling. This is an exceptional circumstance where the proposal would provide social infrastructure to meet an identified local need for in-borough placement of children which could otherwise not exist. In any event, the residential children's home remains a legitimate form of housing that caters for a specific sector of the wider housing market for which there is an identified demand. In this context, the proposal does not result in the loss of housing in real terms. As such, the loss of the existing dwelling use is justified, and the proposed children's home use of the property is acceptable on balance.

It is also important to note that this arrangement would be akin to a single family and the dwelling could be converted back to a C3 dwelling with no external or internal changes being proposed.

The Council has recently approved identical proposal at 24 Douglas Crescent, Hayes (LPA ref. 76090/APP/2024/552) for changes of use from C3 to C2.

As such, the proposal would comply with the aims of Policy DMH 8 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) and Policy H12 of the London Plan (2021).

Impact on the character of the area

NPPF 2023 makes it clear that good design is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) requires that development proposals should: Form and enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, with due regard to existing and emerging street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions.

The Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One Strategic Policy BE1 seeks a quality of design in all new development that enhances and contributes to the area in terms of form, scale and materials; is appropriate to the identity and context of the townscape; and would improve the quality of the public realm and respect local character.

Policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) states that new development will be required to be designed to the highest standards and incorporate principles of good design.

In this case there are no external changes proposed as part of the proposed change of use, as such the character and appearance of the building and street scene will be preserved.

The comings and goings from the property would be akin to a residential dwelling and therefore the character of the area would not be significantly impacted.

Impact on the amenities of the adjoining occupiers of the site

One of the core principles of the NPPF is to ensure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Policy D3 of the London Plan that development proposals should deliver appropriate outlook, privacy and amenity. Policy D13 of the London Plan states - C) New noise and other nuisance-generating development proposed close to residential and other noise-sensitive uses should put in place measures to mitigate and manage any noise impacts for neighbouring residents and businesses.

Policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) seeks to ensure that development proposals do not adversely impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties and open space. The supporting text for this policy states that the Council will expect new development proposals to carefully consider layout and massing in order to ensure development does not result in an increased sense of enclosure and loss of outlook.

Given the intended form of occupation, which would be akin to a family in residence rather than an institutional care home. There would be a maximum of 4 staff during day shift (mostly to chaperone the children to/from their schools) and a maximum of 2 staff during night shift (mostly to chaperone the children who would like an evening out). The level of occupation is reasonably in line with what would be anticipated for a regular single family dwellinghouse, therefore noise and disturbance impact to neighbouring occupiers would likely be negligible.

No extensions are proposed so there would also be no harmful impact on neighbouring outlook or light.

Transport

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states development should be refused if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Policies DMT 1 and DMT 2 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) require the Council to consider whether the traffic generated by proposed developments is acceptable in terms of the local highway and junction capacity, traffic flows and conditions of general highway or pedestrian safety.

Policy DMT 5 Part A of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) states - Development proposals will be required to ensure that safe, direct and inclusive access for pedestrians and cyclists is provided on the site connecting it to the wider network.

There is provision on site for 3 cars. However, all staff and children would travel by non-car modes given the accessible location. If a car is needed occasionally, they would only use approved taxis. There would therefore be no impact on parking congestion. Furthermore, the on-street parking is restricted in any event. Staff would be based locally and would use a combination of train, bus, bike and electric scooter and walking to travel to/from the property. Therefore, it is anticipated that the additional trip generation would be minimal as well as the impact on parking congestion.

Furthermore, the site is within a sustainable location and national planning local policies also promotes the use of walking and cycle over the use of private car.

6. Conclusion

The change of use would be acceptable as the proposal is providing a much-needed community resource. The proposal would not detrimentally impact the character of the area, neighbouring amenities or parking demand. The scheme complies with relevant policy and guidance and should therefore be approved without delay.