

TWC/2024/0265

Kensington, 69 New Church Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 1JE
Change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a three-bed residential care home (Use Class C2)

APPLICANT

Care Perspectives Ltd,

RECEIVED

27/03/2024

PARISH

Wellington

WARD

Arleston and College

THIS APPLICATION HAS BEEN CALLED TO COMMITTEE AT THE REQUEST OF COUNCILLOR LEE CARTER (WARD MEMBER)

<https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationssummary.aspx?applicationnumber=TWC/2024/0265>

1. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to conditions and informatives.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The site of 'Kensington' is located on the eastern side of New Church Road, Wellington at its junction with Holyhead Road.

2.2 In terms of the surrounding context, the application site is located within a residential area of Telford with other residential properties on all sides. The character of the area is generally that of housing of mixed character but generally two storey semi-detached and detached dwellings.

2.3 The application site is located circa 500m to the south of Wellington Market town centre which provides a broad range of shops and services.

2.4 The unit to which the change of use relates comprises a spacious 2-storey four-bedroom detached dwelling with parking and ample private amenity space.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a three-bed residential care home (Use Class C2).

3.2 The proposed care home will provide a home for upto three young persons between the ages of seven (7) and seventeen (17) under the care of the applicants, whilst living collectively in a family setting.

- 3.3** No external alterations are proposed to the dwelling other than an increase in hardstanding to the frontage. The parking area will be re-configured to provide formalised parking spaces, utilising the existing access.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1** None

5. RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

- 5.1** National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 5.2** Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP) - 2011-2031
SP1 Telford
SP4 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
HO7 Specialist housing needs
C3 Implications of development on highways
C5 Design of parking
BE1 Design Criteria
- Homes for All SPD

6. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1** The application has been publicised through direct notification to neighbouring properties, local members and the Wellington Town Council.
- 6.2** The Local Planning Authority received 32 objections and 45 supporting representations to the scheme.
- 6.3** The following summarised issues were raised in objection to the proposal:
- Insufficient parking provision and highway safety impacts
 - The property may house people with history of substance abuse or mental health disorders.
 - No security measures proposed
 - In close proximity to local school
 - Situated on a busy main road
 - Sub-station within property
 - Roman well within grounds of garden
 - Overlooking

- Regular and considerable substance abuse takes place local vicinity.
- Adjoining residential streets are dark and secluded.
- Applicant rated as inadequate through Ofsted
- Business use proposed to have impact on mental health of neighbours
- Concerns over care during school holidays

6.4 The following summarised points were raised in support of the proposal:

- Parking will be ample – similar to a family dwelling
- The proposed family setting will help nurture and enrich the lives of disabled and mentally ill children; everyone has a right to be part of a community
- There is not enough care provision for children in the area
- 24/7 care will ensure limited issues
- Proposal will showcase Telford as an inclusive and welcoming Borough
- The NHS is suffering and facilities such as this will help take the load and support our young generation
- Objections are based on misunderstanding and unfounded fears of the end users
- To be run by a well-established care home provider

7. STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS

7.1 Wellington Town Council – Object:

Concerns were raised over the lack of parking provision.

7.2 Cllr Lee Carter – Object:

Objecting to the application on the following grounds, and a call-in request made for Committee determination.

1) The change of use of this house would be significantly out of character with the surrounding area which is well established residential, mainly elderly residents and on the whole a very quiet peaceful neighbourhood although it has seen an uptick in criminal activity recently including drug taking, drinking on the streets and anti-social behaviour which is requiring significant Council and Police resource to tackle.

2) This development has the potential to undermine highway safety. The property sits almost on the junction of New Church Road and Holyhead Road which is an extremely busy junction even more so at School Opening Closing times with a significant number of vehicles using the area. Again the Council and Police are already investing a significant amount of resource to tackle anti-social parking in the area and this development has the potential to exacerbate that. It may well be claimed that the owner/developer of the facility doesn't think there will be a significant increase of vehicles, however there is

precedent for this with similar developments not too far away. Developers initially having claimed that 'traffic' won't be an issue but it has actually turned out that traffic becomes an issue mainly due to the focus of the management of the facility being on the management of the residents rather than visitors parking (recent development on Avondale road is a classic case in point.)

7.3 Cllr Angela McClements – Object:

Objecting to the application on the following grounds:

Many residents in the vicinity have raised their concerns about the unsuitability of the location, as it is very near to the Shortwood Primary School and are worried about whether the property may house persons with dependency on drugs or alcohol and are alarmed that they will be free to come and go as they please. It appears that there are no security measures in place. I am concerned also about the provision of car parking and note that Wellington Town Council have objected on this.

7.4 Highways – Support Subject to conditions

The change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a three-bed residential care home (Use Class C2), would likely have a negligible impact on the adopted carriageway in the vicinity of the property. The proposals would be in accordance with the Authority's Adopted Parking Standards. Taking the above into consideration the Local Highway Authority do not consider the development to give rise to any unacceptable highway safety impact which would warrant refusal on highway grounds.

7.5 Specialist Housing Team – Support

This application would meet identified needs which are mentioned within the Specialist & Supported Accommodation Strategy 2020-2025 (Young vulnerable people, including care leavers).

The Housing Team will continue to liaise with the applicants to better understand their model and offer support, they will also be required to meet Ofsted regulated standards. The Housing Team has also advised that this provider is known to Telford & Wrekin as they are on the West Midlands Residential Framework who we would approach first for any residential requirements for our care of young people. The Housing Team are also working with this provider as we have another young person residing with them in their Wolverhampton residential home to which we have had no concerns with the provider nor the service they have given so far.

7.6 Shropshire Fire Service – Comment:

As part of the planning process, consideration should be given to the information contained within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's "Fire Safety Guidance for Commercial and Domestic Planning Applications" document. Standard informative to be applied.

8. APPRAISAL

8.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of development
- Scale and Design
- Impact on the amenity of adjacent properties / uses
- Highways impacts
- Other matters

Principle of development:

8.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP) which was adopted in January 2018. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

8.3 The application site is located within the Built up Area of Telford, where the principle of residential development is generally considered acceptable. This is subject to appropriate scale and design, impact on neighbouring properties and any technical constraints being satisfactorily addressed; all of which have been considered during the assessment carried out.

8.4 The proposed development would see the existing 4-bedroom dwelling being utilised in its current form, as a three-bedroom children's care home (plus 1no staff bedroom). In this instance, the application site is already in residential use, therefore the principle of residential development on the application site is considered appropriate and therefore complies with policy SP1 and SP4 of the TWLP.

Scale and Design:

8.5 The application site comprises an existing detached 4-bedroom dwelling with ample parking and private amenity space. No alterations are proposed to the dwelling, other than simply re-configuring the established rooms to provide communal living facilities and separate staff facilities.

8.6 The proposed development will provide private bedrooms for each of the three (3) children in their care and the fourth bedroom utilised for staff sleeping quarters (during the shared night shift). The private garden amenity space will be utilised by the children and carers, in the same manner as a standard 'family home' and is therefore considered appropriate in size for this use.

- 8.7 The scale and design of the dwelling will not alter and therefore not impact the existing streetscene and the design of the internal arrangements are considered appropriate for the type and level of care being proposed. The proposal is therefore considered with the relevant parts of BE1 and HO7 of the TWLP in respect to scale and design.
- 8.8 Policy HO7 of the TWLP will support proposals within Use Class C2 and other forms of residential accommodation including retirement homes to address specialist housing needs, provided that:
- i. The proposed development is designed to meet the specific needs of residents, including requirements for disabled people, where appropriate;
 - ii. The location of the development (including where such provision is part of a larger scheme) is in close proximity to community and support facilities, shops and services, and public transport connections; and
 - iii. The proposed development relates well to the local context in design, scale and form.
- 8.9 As is stated above, the site is located in a sustainable location, is appropriate in design given the limited changes being made and meets the specific needs of its proposed residents and as such complies with Policy HO7 of the TWLP.
- 8.10 Section 7 of the Homes for All SPD sets out the type of supported and specialist housing that is required to meet identified needs within the Borough. Accommodation for vulnerable young people is an identified need and the proposal is support by our Specialist Housing Team. This is further supported by a Ministerial Statement on planning for accommodation for looked after children released in May 2023.

Impact on the amenity of adjacent properties / uses:

- 8.11 Policy BE1 of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan states that the Council will support development which demonstrates that there is no significant adverse impact on nearby properties by noise, dust, odour or light pollution or that new development does not prejudice or undermine existing surrounding uses.
- 8.12 As an existing dwelling, and the proposed use being that which shares similarities to the working of a family home, Officers do not consider that there will be any adverse impact on nearby properties by way of noise, dust, odour or light pollution.
- 8.13 The proposed development will provide a home for three children ranging between the ages of seven (7) and seventeen (17). Each of the children will be in full-time education and will therefore be reliant upon the carers for means of travel to/from the site as and when required.
- 8.14 Between the daytime hours of 08:00 and 17:00, children will generally be cared for by two carers but with an additional carer present (3 total inc

Manager) during busy times such as meal times. The rota shift changes take place at 08:00 and 17:00, and there will only ever be two carers present on-site throughout the night.

- 8.15 In terms of staff meetings, the Operational Management Plan advises that these would generally be undertaken off-site as the care home is not considered an appropriate setting for such meetings, as the aim is to operate as closely to a family environment as possible. On the rare occasions such meetings would take place on-site (i.e. for safety or quality inspections) these would be undertaken during school hours.
- 8.16 Likewise, visits made by Social Workers and Ofsted would also be infrequent. The Operational Management Plan advises that Ofsted is typically once a year and social workers once every 3-6months. As such, the intensity of these visits are limited and would be comparable to a family home. The additional over-provision of car parking factors this into consideration, in any event.
- 8.17 The supporting material outlines how the Applicant (Care Perspectives Ltd) prides itself on ensuring that their homes are welcoming and warm places to live which encourage young people to flourish and grow by undertaking education, hobbies and leisure activities. It is essential to their model of care, and to provide the best outcomes for young persons, that their homes mirror a traditional family home within a community setting, as this is the best way of supporting the development of young persons.
- 8.18 Whilst the proposed development will offer a level of on-site care (as set out in the Operational Management Plan), it is intended that the daily operation of the home will be undiscernible to that of a large dwellinghouse with the young persons coming and going for education purposes and the adults coming and going for work purposes and thus, will not prejudice or undermine the existing surrounding uses. It is considered therefore that the proposal accords with Policies BE1 and HO7 of the TWLP in relation to impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

Highway Impacts

- 8.19 In recognition of the proposed development and staffing rota presented in the Operational Management Plan, the level of traffic associated with the development does not differ significantly from that of the existing residential dwelling. Shift changes are proposed to take place at non-peak traffic times and therefore, there is no significant highway safety impacts to warrant refusal of the application and it is considered compliant with Policy C3 of the TWLP.
- 8.20 At present the site accommodates an informal driveway with available space to accommodate upto 3 cars, in addition to the existing garage.
- 8.21 The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access arrangement (which has appropriate visibility for the small scale use and location) and formalise

parking arrangements within the curtilage by increasing the area of hardstanding and delineating formal parking spaces. It is proposed that 3 car parking spaces will align the northern boundary and following demolition of the existing garage, a further 3 spaces are provided in its place (a total of 6 car parking spaces). The applicants have sought to increase this parking provision, which is now an over-provision, to satisfy some of the concerns raised by local residents.

- 8.22 Whilst the proposal is for a children's care home (and the parking standards for care differ from residential dwellings), it is acknowledged that the proposal will be operated in the same manner as a residential dwelling. The children being cared for range from ages 7-17 and will therefore not have use of a car, with only the carers requiring parking facilities.
- 8.23 The Operations Management Plan outlines that generally, there will be two carers on-site of an evening and two during the daytime, with this occasionally increasing to three (or rarely, four). This differs no more than a standard family home with visitors/deliveries etc. The facility will operate with the use of a 'pool' car for day-to-day use, meaning movements to/from the property are limited to a single vehicle, other than at handover times.
- 8.24 For clarity, Appendix 4 of the TWLP requires C2 Uses to provide parking facilities at a rate of one per full-time staff member, and one space per 4-bedspaces. The proposal therefore exceeds the TWLP Parking Standards.
- 8.25 The Local Highway Authority (LHA) are aware of the issues referred to by local residents and the Local Councillors with respect to on-street parking in the vicinity of the site at school drop off/pick up times, this is however only for a short period of time. As already stated, with the applicant offering an over-provision of parking, the LHA would not recommend refusal of this scheme based on an existing issue relating to school traffic.
- 8.26 The Local Highways Authority are satisfied (subject to the conditioning of the Operational Management Plan and the car parking being laid out as proposed prior to occupation) that the proposal complies with Policies C3 and C5 of the TWLP.

Other matters

- 8.27 In addition to the points discussed and addressed above, other concerns were raised by local residents which are addressed below.
- 8.28 With respect to the presence of a sub-station and roman well within the existing garden; there are no proposals to remove or alter the existing garden

arrangements and therefore these features will be retained in situ. It is worth noting that the well is neither statutorily listed, or a locally listed building and neither is it listed on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Therefore consultation with Built Heritage was not necessary.

- 8.29 The current Ofsted rating of an applicant is not a material planning consideration. However, in response to the concerns raised within local representations, the applicant has provided a copy of all the recent Ofsted reports (2023 and 2024) for homes they operate – all of which are rated good or outstanding. The Housing Team has also confirmed that they have experience of a good working relationship with this company.
- 8.30 Due to the limited changes being made to the property, the issue of overlooking or overbearance is not considered justified and does not differ from the existing situation.
- 8.31 Care during the school holiday will continue as set out in the Operational Management Plan which will be a condition of any consent.
- 8.32 Given the limited development (relating to the demolition of the existing single garage and laying of further hardstanding), Officers do not consider a Construction Environmental Management Plan to be necessary. These works will be carried out over a very short period, with adequate parking space being available on-site for personnel during these works.
- 8.33 The concerns of residents over the personal history of the users is acknowledged, but this is not a material planning consideration. These homes need to be in central locations, with access to facilities, good schools and supported by an established local community. The applicants are looking to provide a ‘family home’ to the young persons in its care, rather than institutional settings. This approach is also favoured by the statutory regulator, Ofsted, who has been encouraging providers to move away from the more traditional institutional model, having recognised that ‘institutionalised’ persons can then have difficulty transitioning effectively to independent living and the workplace. Policy HO7, the Homes for All SPD and national guidance supports the provision of care homes for young persons and it is considered that this proposal complies with the criteria set out within local policy.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Having regard to the above considerations, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development that falls within the ‘Built Up’ area of Telford. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in regards to scale and design and would remain in-keeping with the character and appearance of the immediate area and will not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residential properties. As such, there are considered

to be no technical reasons for to warrant refusal of this application and appropriate conditions imposed to control its future use and management.

- 9.2** The proposal is therefore deemed to be compliant with the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031 and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

10. DETAILED RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1** Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee on this application is that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** (with the authority to finalise any matter including conditions, legal agreement terms, or any later variations) subject to the following:

- A) The following conditions (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):-

A04 - Time Limit Full

C011 – Finishing material to match (hardstanding)

CO13 – Parking, Loading, Unloading and Turning Area

C038 - Development in accordance with plans

Custom – Development in accordance with Operational Management Plan

Custom – Restrict use and number of children in care (3)

Informatives:

I32 Fire Authority

I40 Conditions

I41 Reason for Grant