

Planning Statement

Introduction

The statement has been prepared to support a change of use planning application from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a children's home (Class C2) at 64 Walker Grove, Hatfield, AL10 9PL.

The property would become a long-term home providing 24 hour care for up to 4 vulnerable children (ages 8 to 16).

64 Walker Grove is in a residential estate to the west of Hatfield. The property comprises a detached five bedroom two storey red brick home with integral garage and faces south onto Walker Grove. It includes two off-road parking spaces and a rear amenity- garden area. Walker Grove is a residential estate road. To the west of no.64 is a large area of public open space. To the east, Walker Grove links with Cunningham Avenue, the main spine road through the estate. It is part of a western urban extension to Hatfield, including leisure and employment uses off Mosquito Way/Tamblin Way and the de Havilland Campus of Hertfordshire University off Mosquito Way/Albatross Way. Both areas are within 1km of no.64. Since its erection in the 1990s the building has been in use as a single residential dwelling.

The layout of the dwelling currently comprises an entry hall, kitchen with pantry, lounge, bedroom and WC on the ground floor. On the first floor, there are four bedrooms (including two ensuite rooms) and a family bath. We have therefore allowed for 4 bedrooms to be used for children and the fifth bedroom to be used as staff/office room.

Outside, there is parking for two cars on the drive with space to the side for the storage of waste and recycling bins. Additional car parking is available in the integral garage, neighbour's garage(long leased) and two car parking spaces and garage outside 52 Walker Grove. Bicycles could be stored in the rear garden. The main garden is to the rear of the house and is screened from the street.

The waste and recycling will be stored in separate bins and stored to the side of the dwelling, adjacent to the drive as existing. As is the existing process, bins will be brought to the front of the house to be collected.

Use of the garden and noise generation will be proportionate to a residential dwelling with a family residing therein.

Proposal

The application proposal is for the change of use of a dwelling house (class C3) to a children's home (Class C2). There will be no external changes to the property.

The purpose of the application is to enable the creation of a children's home for children that have been taken into care permanently. The property will become a long-term home for up to 4 vulnerable children. According to the OFSTED report, children's social care data in England 2017 to 2018; main findings "there is a growing demand for children social care services and it shows the decrease, nationwide, in the number of local authority homes and an increase in the number of privately run homes".

The proposed home would help with the increased demand for children social care services and give the children a home and community to belong.

The proposed home would house up to four children. The children will have learning difficulties some of whom are born from parents with learning difficulties and have nowhere to stay. They would attend local day centres and specialist schools which are close to the house as we have many local provisions through Hertfordshire County Council. The children will be aged between 8 to 16 years old. This home will be a permanent home for this children to stay until they are 16 years old and then accommodated into adult residential service provisions.

Staff

Depending on their learning disability, each child may have a staff attending to them during the day. Hence, maximum of five staff and two part-time staff will be employed at the home. None of the staff will reside at the property, but one staff member will stay overnight, each night as a waking night.

Internal/External Changes

The proposal would not make any external or internal physical changes to the building. The dwelling would function much like it's existing use, with the exception that one of the existing bedrooms would be used as the manager's office/staff sleeping room.

Access

The access to the property would remain as existing.

Parking

Property has space for 3 cars, two cars on the drive and one car in the integral garage. Additional dedicated car parking spaces are available as follows:

- One car parking space in next door garage at 62 Walker Grove. A long lease on the next door garage has been acquired by the applicant.
- Two car parking spaces and a garage are available at 52 Walker Grove for overflow car parking. Applicant also owns the property at 52 Walker Grove. It is a HMO property let conditionally let to students without cars.

In total, 7 car parking spaces are available for the children home. The proposed use would not increase the demand for on street parking in excess of the need created by a family in residence.

Shopping and Deliveries

The proposed children's home would in many ways be like a family home. Accordingly, there should be minimal visitors, as this is a permanent home for the children. Accordingly, the deliveries, in scale and frequency, would be similar to a domestic property, on average one to two deliveries per week.

Sustainable Development

The proposal is an example of sustainable development in that it is cited in a location close to shops, services, and public transportation options. Furthermore, it contributes to the sustainable development social objective by providing residential accommodation for a group with specific housing needs, which is in full accordance with the provisions of paragraph 117 of the NPPF.

Although the proposal technically result in a loss of a Use class C3 unit, the proposed use is commensurate with a residential use and will manifest as a stable and long-term home for three children. In addition the provision of special-needs Housing within residential areas are supported and prioritised by policy. There is real need for children's homes in Hertfordshire as evidenced by OFSTED. There are very few specialist homes for children needing specialist care as long stay hospitals is no longer in the government agenda. Integration within mainstream society for people with learning difficulties is important.

National/Local Housing Policies

In summary, it has been demonstrated that the proposed development accords with national and local planning policies. In addition, the proposal would not give rise to any demonstrable impact on amenity or highway impact. Furthermore, although the proposal does not involve any external alterations or internal physical alterations that will need to be assessed against design policies, it complies with design standards for parking, and provide sufficient amenity space and waste storage for the use proposed. As such, and in line with NPPF advice (para 11), the council should approve the planning application, since there are no "adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits" of the proposed development.