

Agenda Item 32.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
202270	04/11/2020	Norreys	Norreys;

Applicant	Wokingham Borough Council
Site Address	12 Rectory Road, Wokingham, RG40 1DH
Proposal	Full application for the proposed change of use from dwellinghouse (C3) to non-residential institution (F1). Erection of two single storey extensions to the south-west and north-west of the property, and demolition of the existing garage.
Type	Full Planning Application
Officer	Adriana Gonzalez
Reason for determination by committee	Applicant is Wokingham Borough Council

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 14 October 2020
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY
<p>This planning application is before the planning committee as the application is made on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council and involves an increase in staff numbers.</p> <p>The application proposes a change of use and redevelopment of the site to accommodate an essential community facility, which will provide support to vulnerable children and their families. The proposed scheme includes the erection of two single storey extensions to the front and rear of the host building, with associated parking and landscaping.</p> <p>The site is within a sustainable location, adjoining Wokingham Town centre with excellent transport links.</p> <p>The proposed scheme offers the opportunity for positive improvements in visual terms, whilst providing much a needed support and training centre for vulnerable children within the Borough. The proposal would result in a net loss of residential space, however it is considered that this loss is greatly outweighed by the benefit to the wider community.</p> <p>The proposed extensions to the building would respect the character and appearance of the application building and the surrounding Conservation Area. Likewise, the proposal would not result in any undue harm to the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. Paragraphs 1-37 provide further details to these material considerations, and subject to conditions 1-9 the application is recommended for approval.</p>

PLANNING STATUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Development Location – Wokingham • Adjoining Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area • Adjoining Listed Buildings • Archaeological Site • Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone • Green Route – Rectory Road • District Town and Local Centre • Special Protection Area – 7 km

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

Conditions:

1. Timescale

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

***Reason:** In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).*

2. Approved details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 200062-1-001; 200062-2-001; 200062-3-001; 200062-4-001; 200062-2-101; 200062-3-101; 200062-4-101 & 200062-3-201 received by the local planning authority on 1st September 2020. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

***Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

3. External materials

Except where stated otherwise in the approved plans and application form, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted shall be of a similar appearance to those used in the existing building unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

***Reason:** To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

4. Landscaping details

Prior to the occupation of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

***Reason:** To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

5. Protection of trees

a) Prior to the demolition of the garage there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837:2012. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: *To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence*
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

6. Cycle parking - details required

Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/parking facilities for the users of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: *In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

7. Parking to be provided

No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

8. Restriction of use

The F1 use hereby permitted shall be carried on only for a Family Resource Centre and for no other purpose in Class F1 of the Schedule of the Town and Country Planning [Use Classes] Order 1987 (as amended) or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order [with or without modification].

Reason: In granting this permission the local planning authority has had regard to the special circumstances of this case, being the proposed use is acceptable in this location, and wishes to have the opportunity of exercising control over any subsequent alternative use in the interests of the amenities of the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6.

9. Hours of use

The use hereby permitted shall not operate other than between the hours of 09:00 - 21:00 Mondays to Fridays or 09:00 - 19:00 Saturdays and Sundays and shall not operate at all on Bank or National Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

Informatives:

1. Whilst it would appear from the application that the proposed development is to be entirely within the curtilage of the application site, the granting of planning permission does not authorise you to gain access or carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.
2. The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
3. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history for this site.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

For Commercial

Site Area	1100sqm (including shared access drive)
Existing use	Residential dwellinghouse (188sqm)

Proposed Use	Non-residential institution (241.3sqm)
Number of jobs created/lost	2 full-time and 4 part-time jobs created
Existing parking spaces	2-3 car spaces
Proposed parking spaces	3 car spaces

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Conservation	No objections in principle. Concern with respect to the proposed extension proximity to the curtilage listed brick boundary wall of the adjacent listed Milton Road Methodist Church. <i>(Officer's note: the impact upon adjoining heritage assets is addressed below in relevant section of this report.)</i>
WBC Drainage	No objections
WBC Environmental Health	No objections
WBC Highways	No objections
WBC Trees & Landscape	No objections in principle. Concern with respect of potential impact of development on mature tree to the south-east of the existing garage to be demolished. <i>(Officer's note: further details on this matter are discussed below in relevant section of this report.)</i>
WBC Cleaner & Greener	No comments received
Berkshire Archaeology	No objections
Natural England	No objections

REPRESENTATIONS
Town/Parish Council: No comments received
Local Members: No comments received
Neighbours: No comments received

APPLICANTS POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application supported by a Planning Statement and Heritage Statement • The proposed use will be of significant benefit to the community as a whole • Sustainable location close to local services • Proposed development will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP4	Infrastructure Requirements

	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP14	Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre
	CP15	Employment Development
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB24	Designated Heritage Assets
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide – Section 4

PLANNING ISSUES
<p>Site Description:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The application site is located adjoining the Wokingham Town Centre to the north-east, and comprises a single storey, 3no bedroom bungalow-style property, which is thought to have been constructed in the 1960s, and a detached garage which appears to be of slightly more recent construction. The building is significantly set-back from the main road, that is Rectory Road, and it is accessed via a private drive off of this street. 2. The existing building has a C-shape layout configuration, with a courtyard amenity space at the centre, ample gravelled driveway covering the majority of the site to the front, and a wooden pergola forming a passageway between the house and the driveway area. Abundant vegetation complements the site boundaries. 3. From the information provided in the Planning Statement, the lawful use of the premises is a single family residential dwelling (C3 use). The application form states the property is currently inhabited. 4. To the north of the site is “Bird Mews”, a small residential cul-de-sac. To the east is the car park at the rear of Rectory Road Surgery. To the south and sharing the same driveway access is no. 12a Rectory Road which is a two storey detached residential dwelling. To the west is the car park for the former Police Station which has been converted to flats, and the Milton Road Baptist Church.

Proposal Description:

5. The proposed scheme is for a change of use and redevelopment of the site to host the WBC Family Resource Centre (Use Class F1), which provides support to vulnerable children and their families by providing parenting support, assessment and supervision. The proposed facility would comprise a waiting area with reception office; four individual contact rooms with separate garden areas and toilets; and staff facilities including kitchen, laundry and toilet.
6. Alongside the change of use, the proposal involves the demolition of the existing detached garage and garden shed to the rear, and the erection of two single storey extensions to the main property to allow for all necessary facilities. The proposed extension to the north-east rear corner (to accommodate a new toilet) would measure 3 metres in width by 1.65 metres in depth, and would continue with same roof height and style as the existing building. The proposed front extension to the south-east of the building would measure 8.2 metres in depth by 5.9 metres in width. It would have a flat roof with pitch ends to match the ridge height of the existing property. The existing built footprint of the main house is approximately 188sqm. The proposed extensions would represent an increase of 53.3sqm, for a total 241.3sqm.
7. The proposed scheme includes modifications to the existing fenestration and door arrangements to facilitate new access to the building, as well as changes to the external finishing materials which is proposed to be render throughout to provide a consistent appearance. The proposed development is being designed to be fully wheelchair accessible.

Principle of Development:

8. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
9. Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map and therefore replaces the proposals map adopted through the Core Strategy, as per the requirement of policy CP9. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories. As the site is within a major development location, the proposal is acceptable in principle.
10. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that, *inter alia*:
 - a) Are appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers
 - h) Contribute towards the provision of an appropriate sustainable network of community facilities
 - i) Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land

11. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy aims to ensure that development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities), and outlines that planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of (b) Children, young people and families, including co-ordination of services to meet their needs. This is a significant material consideration. Community facilities include development for health – including preventative social care and community support services, such is the case of the proposed scheme.
12. It is acknowledged that the conversion of the residential dwelling (C3 use) to a support centre (F1 use) would result in the loss of a residential unit, which is in conflict with Core Strategy Policy CP3 (i). However, the proposal would still comply with parts (a) and (h) of Policy CP3, and would be also in accordance with the principles of Policy CP2, as the scheme would provide a much needed essential community facility for providing support, assessment and supervision to vulnerable children and their families. In addition, it must be noted that the reason for this planning application is to relocate the WBC Family Resource Centre from its current location at 85 Finchampstead Road. Moving the centre helps facilitate provision of the South Wokingham Distributor Road, a key infrastructure project which will serve significant residential development within the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location. It is therefore considered that the benefit to the wider community arising from this F1 facility would greatly outweigh the net loss of a C3 residential dwelling.
13. As such, given the above it is considered that the principle of the proposed change of use is acceptable in planning policy terms.

Character of the Area:

14. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.
15. Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) states that the Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their setting.
16. No. 12 Rectory Road is not a designated heritage asset, but it is located immediately adjoining the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area. It is noted that the site is also located near to a number of neighbouring listed buildings, including the Milton Road Baptist Church (Grade II); the brick boundary wall forming the south-west boundary of the application site (which is curtilage listed structure to the church); and the former Police Station (Grade II).
17. The subject building is a 1960's style bungalow set back from Rectory Road. The Borough Design Guide states that front extensions are generally only acceptable where the building is set well back from the street frontage in a large plot, should be no more than one storey in height and should not project significantly forward of the

building line; the overriding consideration in all cases will be the impact on the street scene and local character. In this respect, due to its considerable set-back from the main road, the proposal would have very limited views from Rectory Road or the adjoining carpark to the western side. It is not considered there would be any detrimental impact on visual amenity or local character, as the proposed extensions would be modest in scale, not projecting forward in respect to the prevalent street building line (given its backland location) and continuing with the same design and maximum roof ridge height of the original property. It is considered that the proposed external changes and extensions would be in keeping with the architectural style of the host building, and would respect the overall character and appearance of surrounding properties and Conservation Area.

18. The WBC Conservation Officer has raised no in principle objections to this application. There is however, a degree of concern in respect to the proximity of the proposed front extension to the south-west brick boundary wall – which is a curtilage listed structure of the adjacent Milton Road Baptist Church. It is noted from the submitted Proposed Block Plan that the proposed extension would be entirely within the curtilage of the site, with no roof components overhanging over and above the listed boundary wall. Likewise, given the modest scale of the proposed extension, it is not considered that excavation works for the foundations would be substantial enough to result in any undue harm upon this curtilage listed structure. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not have any harmful impact on nearby heritage assets nor upon the character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area. This would be compliant with policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan, and the principles set within the Borough Design Guide.

Neighbouring Amenity:

19. Overlooking: R15 of the Borough Design Guide requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22 metres to the rear and 10 metres to the street.
20. Given the existing backland location of the proposal building, there would be well over 50 metres set back from the main road and properties across Rectory Road, and a minimum 21 metres separation distance between the furthestmost front wall of the proposed front extension and the rear walls of adjoining dwellings no. 12a Rectory Road and flats on the former Police Station; these are considered sufficient to ensure an adequate level of privacy between neighbouring properties, in accordance with the Borough Design Guide. The new windows on the rear elevation have been designed to be obscure-glazed to mitigate any overlooking upon the neighbouring dwelling no. 13a Milton Road. In addition, the single storey nature of the proposed extensions as well as the existing boundary treatments between the site and adjoining residential properties, would guarantee that there is no detrimental impact upon the living conditions of adjoining occupiers in terms of loss of privacy.
21. Loss of Light and Overbearing: R16 of the Borough Design Guide recommends that for single storey properties, the minimum distance to limit sense of enclosure between new and existing developments should be 1 metre from flank to boundary and 12 metres back to flank; extensions must be carefully positioned and designed to minimise any potential impact upon neighbours. R18 of the Borough Design Guide aims to protect sunlight and daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties.

22. In this instance, the nearest residential dwellings to the proposed development would be no. 12a Rectory Road to the front and no. 13a Milton Road to the rear. The proposed rear extension would be policy compliant in terms of separation to the boundary. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed front extension would be sited closer to the south-west side boundary than the minimum 1 metre recommendation, it should be noted that there is no residential amenity issue as the area adjoining this side is the parking area of the former police station. As such, it is unlikely there would be any overbearing or overshadowing impact upon the private residential amenities of adjoining occupiers.

23. Noise and Disturbance: the nearest residential developments are those located to the front in Rectory Road (nos. 12a and flats from former police station) and no. 13a Milton Road to the rear. It is acknowledged that the proposal would result in an increase in the level of users within the site. Notwithstanding, this would be only within the centre's working hours and the external amenity areas would be used in the same way compared to a family dwelling. Nuisance from vehicles would be minimal as on-site parking would be restricted for staff members. The WBC Environmental Officer has raised no objections to the proposal. It follows that no unacceptable impact in terms of noise and disturbance would be likely to occur.

24. Nonetheless, a condition restricting the hours of use of the support centre has been included under condition 9.

Access and Movement:

25. Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy seeks to manage travel demand with sustainable travel modes, appropriate vehicle parking and minimisation of traffic impacts. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan set out the minimum parking requirements for development proposals. Policy CP9 states that the scale of development must reflect the existing and proposed levels of facilities, services and accessibility at or in the location.

26. The site benefits from an existing vehicular access from Rectory Road, which would be utilised with the current scheme, and it is considered acceptable for access by all modes of transport.

27. In terms of parking, Appendix 2 refers that for a D1¹ (Health Centre) use, the required parking provision is one space per full time member of staff plus three spaces per consulting room. The submitted application form states there would be two full time members of staff on site, and the proposed floor plan shows four consulting rooms. Whilst it is acknowledged that these would generate a total parking rate higher than what is being proposed (three spaces), in this instance consideration must be given to the scale of proposed development, that it would not be a traditional health centre use with a higher turnover of visitors, and the sustainable location of the site.

28. The site is located within a major development area and immediately adjoining the Wokingham Town Centre, meaning that users of the support centre would have good access to public transport and would not necessarily be reliant upon driving. There is a bus stop immediately outside the site on Rectory Road, with direct bus connections

¹ Changes to the Use Classes Order in England were introduced by the Government and have taken effect on 1 September 2020. Accordingly, and for the purpose of this application, the previous use class (D1) is being replaced by the use class (F1).

to Reading and Bracknell, and the site is also within commuting distance (0.6km) of Wokingham Railway Station. It is also noted that there are sufficient display car parks within a short walking distance to the site, as well as road side shorter term parking for visitors. In addition, there is on-site parking provision and secured cycle storage will be included via planning condition (condition 5).

29. The WBC Highways Officer has raised no objections to this application on parking or highways grounds.
30. On this basis, the proposal would be considered acceptable in terms of being sustainably located, and would not result in unacceptable parking pressures on site or surrounding streets, nor prejudice highway safety.

Flooding and Drainage:

31. Policies CC09 and CC10 of the MDD Local Plan relate to flooding and drainage issues. The proposal site is located within Flood Zone 1 with low risk of surface water flooding. The supporting information refers that surface water runoff from the development will be managed via sustainable drainage system and soakaway methods. The WBC Flood Risk and Drainage Officer has evaluated the proposal and determined this is acceptable, and there will be no major changes which may affect the increase of flood risk. As such, no objections are raised to the proposed development on these grounds.

Landscape and Trees:

32. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping, and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.
33. The site is located along Rectory Road which is a Green Route, and adjoining the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, where landscaping to the front and rear of buildings contribute to preserve its character. There are no protected trees within the curtilage of the site or adjoining properties, and whilst there would be some loss of existing landscape features as a result of the proposed extensions, these are not considered to be of any significant value or quality.
34. The WBC Trees and Landscape Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development. However, the Officer did note that there is a mature tree just to the south-east of the garage which contributes to the public amenity and Green Route character, and therefore should be retained and protected in accordance with Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan and BS5837:2012. The demolition of the garage and proposed parking bays could adversely impact the roots of this tree, and so the Officer has indicated that an Arboricultural Impact Assessment incorporating a method statement would be required, in order to ensure that the demolition can take place without damaging the tree. These details will be secured via planning condition 5.
35. In addition, it is important to provide soft and hard landscaping in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Green Route and adjoining Conservation Area. A condition requiring the submission of a landscape proposal plan would be sufficient to address this matter (condition 4).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Special Protection Area (SPA):

36. Community Infrastructure Levy: As the proposal is for a change of use and there is minimal additional floorspace proposed (less than 100sqm), the development is not CIL liable in accordance with the adopted CIL charging schedule.
37. Special Protection Area: The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) was designated under European Directive due to its importance for heathland bird species. Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy specifies proposals that provide 50 or more residential units within 7km (linear) will be individually assessed for whether a significant effect upon the SPA is likely to occur in this regard, the site is within the 7km buffer of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area but given the nature of the development, the proposal does not trigger further mitigation or assessment.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

38. In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. The proposal is intended to support vulnerable children and their families, and this is acknowledged in consideration of the application. Aside from this, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

CONCLUSION

39. The proposed change of use from residential dwelling (Class C3) to non-residential institution (Class F1) is considered acceptable in principle, as the proposal would make a positive contribution to providing an essential community facility for supporting vulnerable children and their families within the Borough and help ensure essential infrastructure is delivered. The site is well located for the proposed use, and the proposed extensions to the building would be modest in scale, and would not cause any harm to the recognised especial character of the conservation area or to nearby listed buildings. The proposal is for a community use adjoining the town centre in a location which is sustainable in transport terms, with alternative modes of transport available to provide access to the site. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with national and local planning policies, and is therefore recommended for approval.