

Agenda Item 58.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
203344	10/02/2021	Woodley	South Lake;

Applicant	Wokingham Borough Council
Site Address	Highwood Bungalow, Fairwater Drive, Woodley, RG5 3JE
Proposal	Full application for a change of use from residential dwelling (Class C3(b)) to Residential institution/nursing home (C2), including a single storey side extension following demolition of the existing carport.
Type	Full Planning Application
Officer	Kieran Neumann
Reason for determination by committee	Applicant is Wokingham Borough Council

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 10 February 2021
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY

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.

The application site consists of a two bedroom detached bungalow which was originally part of the adjacent Highwood Primary School and served as accommodation for the school's caretaker. The site has since been separated from the school.

This application seeks consent to change the use of Highwood Bungalow from a residential dwelling (Class C3) to a residential institution (Class C2) in order to care for vulnerable adults. The application also includes the proposed construction of a single storey side extension to provide an extra bedroom and bathroom for carers of the residents as well as the installation of an internal sprinkler system.

The scheme provides great social benefit in the provision of living accommodation to vulnerable adults, thus complying with Core Strategy Policy CP2 and policy TB09 of the MDDL. This far outweighs the technical loss of a residential dwelling regardless of minor policy conflict with Core Strategy CP3.

The proposed change of use, combined with the subservient nature of the side extension results in a development which would not adversely impact the character of the area. Likewise, the proposal would not result in any undue harm to the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. Paragraphs 1-30 provide further details to these material considerations, and subject to conditions 1-6 the application is recommended for approval.

PLANNING STATUS

- Major Development location
- Groundwater protection zone
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- SSSI Impact Risk Zones

RECOMMENDATION:

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

Conditions and informatives:

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 200178 - A005, 200178 - A006 & 200178 - A007 received by the local planning authority on 02/12/2020. 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 - The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension 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. Restriction of change of use - The premises shall be used only for accommodating and caring for vulnerable adults and for no other purpose, including any other purpose in Class C2 of the Schedule to 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 care of vulnerable adults, 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.

5. The residential occupation of the building as a care and dwelling facility for vulnerable adults shall be limited to no more than two individuals requiring care at any one time.

Reason: In the interests of retaining the character of the area, character of the existing dwelling and the amenities of neighbouring occupants. Relevant Policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

6. 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.

Informatives

1. 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

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
081384	Proposed creation of new vehicular access, creation of 2 x off road parking spaces and erection of new timber access gates. Erection of 1.8m high close board fencing in place of steel palisade fencing	Approved 04/02/2009
092009	Application for a certificate of lawful proposed use for a single storey extension to bungalow	Refused 03/06/2009
090739	Application for a certificate of lawful proposed use for a single storey extension to bungalow	Refused 10/10/2009
090012	Proposed erection of new car port and covered walkway	Approved 11/02/2010

SUMMARY INFORMATION**For Commercial**

Site Area – 576m²

Existing Use – Residential Dwelling
(120.52m²)

Proposed Use – Residential institution
(138.07m²)

Number of jobs created – 3 full-time carers, working 1 at a time on a rota to support the permanent residents.

Existing parking spaces – 2 Spaces

Proposed parking spaces – 2 spaces

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Drainage	No objections
WBC Environmental Health	No objections
WBC Highways	Recommend conditional approval

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council: No objections

Local Members: No comments received

Neighbours: No comments received

APPLICANTS POINTS

- The maximum number of residents will be 3, however the carer will not be in full time residence
 - *Officer comment – the number of permanent residents (vulnerable adults) would be 2. The additional side extension to implement an additional bedroom and bathroom would be used by the carer on shift at the time if they are needed to stay overnight.*
- The care staff are to work on shift patterns with different staff in attendance during day and night
- Wokingham Borough Council are installing sprinkler systems to all their domestic projects to protect human life and protect their building stock

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
	CP8	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	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
	CC05	Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)

		CC10	Sustainable Drainage
Supplementary Documents (SPD)	Planning	BDG	Borough Design Guide – Section 4
			DCLG – National Internal Space Standards

PLANNING ISSUES

Site Description:

1. The application site consists of a moderately sized two-bedroom bungalow-style property which includes a more recently constructed carport located on the eastern flank wall of the building. The site is also approximately 0.8 miles west of Woodley Town Centre and is set back approximately 7.4 metres from the road and it is accessed via (Fairwater Drive). The site is accessed through a private drive off of this street.
2. The building was originally part of the adjacent Highwood Primary School and served as accommodation for the school’s caretaker. The site is now under separate ownership.
3. The existing layout is a simple rectangular configuration, with the interior comprising of two bedrooms, a singular bathroom, a kitchen and separate lounge/dining area. The site harbours ample amenity space to the north/rear of the site and also has a large front garden located to the west of the site. The site includes only a minor amount of vegetation and hedgerows on the southern boundary shared with no.1 Fairwater Drive.
4. From the information provided in the Planning Statement, the lawful use of the premises is a single family residential dwelling (C3 use). The property is currently uninhabited.
5. To the north/ west of the site is the adjoining Highwood Primary School. To the east is a number of residential dwellings situated on Fairwater Drive. To the south is the adjoining 1 Fairwater Drive which is part of two dwelling semi-detached arrangement with no.3 Fairwater Drive. Situated just south-west is no.1 Kingfisher Drive.

Proposal Description:

6. This application seeks consent to change the use of Highwood Bungalow from a residential dwelling (Class C3) to a residential institution (Class C2) in order to care for vulnerable adults.
7. Alongside the change of use, the proposals also include the proposed construction of a single storey side extension to provide an extra bedroom and bathroom for carers of the residents following the demolition of the existing carport, as well as the installation of an internal sprinkler system. The proposed extension on the eastern flank wall of the building would adopt a shallow gable roof significantly set back from the building line and set down from the ridge height of the host building’s roof. The extension would measure approximately 3.4 metres in width and 4.8 metres in depth.

8. The proposed scheme would only include minor internal modifications to accommodate the extension. As the proposals would retain the existing concrete access ramp, it appears that the development is proposed to be fully wheelchair accessible.

Principle of Development:

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be 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.
12. Section (i) of CP3 also highlights that planning permission will be granted for proposals that do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land.
13. With regard to the proposed C2 use, paragraph 91 of the NPPF states that *decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other (...), are safe and accessible (...) and enable and support healthy lifestyles.*
14. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of:
 - An ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing;
 - Children, young people and families, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs;
 - People with special needs, including those with a physical, sensory or learning disability or problems accessing services
15. Policy TB09 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDDLDP) (Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups) also states that the Council will in principle support proposals which provide for the following types of accommodation to provide for peoples' needs over a lifetime.

Loss of C3 Residential:

16. The proposed change of use to Class C2 would result in the loss of a residential dwelling, thus conflicting in part with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy which states that planning permission will be granted on schemes that “do not lead to a net loss in dwellings and other residential accommodation or land”. On the other hand, the proposal would still comply with parts (a) and (h) of Policy CP3.
17. The scheme provides great social benefit and an essential community facility for supporting vulnerable adults within the Borough, subsequently helping ensure essential care is delivered. The proposal therefore complies with Core Strategy Policy CP2 and policy TB09 of the MDDL. This far outweighs the loss of a residential dwelling, regardless of the minor policy conflict with Core Strategy CP3. 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:

18. The area is largely comprised of semi-detached and terraced residential dwellings, with the exception of Highwood Primary School, of which the site in question lies adjacent to.
19. Whilst the proposed C2 use would result in the loss of a residential dwelling, the primary nature of the proposed use would be quasi-residential and as such it is considered to be appropriate due to the existing residential form in the directly local area. A
20. In regards to the proposed side extension, it would comply with the Borough Design Guide in that it would be significantly set back from the building line, as well as set down from the ridge height of the host dwelling’s roof. Its design is considered to be modest and subservient to the host building and therefore the impact on the character of the area would be minimal.

Neighbouring Amenity:

21. It is considered that due to the nature of the proposals and minor the increase in mass and form of the building, there are no additional concerns on loss of light, overbearing or overlooking grounds.
22. Noise and Disturbance: the nearest residential developments are those located to the east and south of the site (nos. 1-3 and 14-24 Fairwater Drive and no.1 Kingfisher Drive). It is acknowledged that the proposal could result in a minor increase in the level of users within the site. However, the increase would be minimal and nuisance from vehicles particularly during the later hours of the day would see only a minor change from the vehicle usage of its original use as a residential dwelling. This is due to the day/night rotor proposed for the carers, which would include one carer in the institution at a time to look after the vulnerable adults in residence. The only exceptional circumstance where there would be more than one member of staff is in the case of a medical emergency.
23. Additionally, the external amenity areas would be used in the same way compared to a family dwelling. The WBC Environmental Health Officer has also raised no objections to the proposal. It follows that no unacceptable impact in terms of noise

and disturbance would be likely to occur.

Access and Movement:

24. 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.
25. The site benefits from an existing vehicular access from Fairwater Drive, which would be utilised with the current scheme, and it is considered acceptable for access by all modes of transport, particularly in a medical emergency.
26. The WBC Highways Officer has raised no objections to this application on parking or highways grounds, however they have recommended conditional approval to ensure adequate on-site parking provision is secured and retained in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity.
27. 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 as a

Flooding and Drainage:

28. 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 Drainage Officer for this application has concluded that due to the nature of the proposals it is not classed as vulnerable development and they consequently raised no objections to the application.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

29. 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.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)
--

<i>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.</i>

CONCLUSION:

30. The proposed change of use from a residential dwelling (Class C3) to a Residential institution/nursing home (C2) is considered acceptable in principle, as the proposal would make a positive contribution to providing an essential community facility for supporting vulnerable adults within the Borough and help ensure essential infrastructure is delivered. The proposed extension to the building would be modest in scale and would not cause any harm to the character of the area, form of the building. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with national and local planning policies, and is therefore recommended for approval.