



Planning Statement

Client: Talem Care Group Limited

Proposal: Full planning application for change of use from hostel to residential supported living development (Class C3) including refurbishment of external elevations and erection of single storey detached residential block to replace existing annex building along with alterations to site layout and parking arrangements

Site: Property and land at 47 Victoria Road, Barnsley

Date: 12th August 2019

Ref: A114740

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning application is submitted following the granting of two planning permissions on the same site. The two permissions are 2017/1681 and 2019/0397. Both these applications were for the same property and involve essentially the same works. They were granted to the same applicant and effectively for the future operator of the premises.
- 1.2 The first permission was for a change of use from the pre-existing hostel on the site to provide six apartment units with a new apartment block providing three units. The second permission, a Section 73 permission varying condition 2 of the previous approval, increased the number of units with seven in the existing former hostel and one extra unit in the new build single storey apartment block.
- 1.3 Consequently, the parent application obtained the permission for the principle works and for the use (which was discussed with and understood by relevant staff at the Borough Council throughout) while the Section 73 application secured changes to allow the delivery of the appropriate facility.
- 1.4 This application is being submitted with two purposes:
 1. To ensure that the permission reflects properly the use to which the property will be put; and
 2. Secures a permission in a form necessary to obtain the requisite funding for this important community facility.

2.0 Background and Context

- 2.1 The proposed use is to provide independent but fully supported living for adults with specialist needs. Effectively the aim is for residents to occupy homes independently but with on-site and 24 hour support by specialist providers to meet their particular needs. The residents will be people with a learning disability and/or mental health and complex support needs. The aim is that by living this way, becoming more independent and developing social skills, residents will be able to extend their ability to integrate socially and to pursue employment opportunities.
- 2.2 The residential apartments are therefore self-contained and need to benefit from planning permission under Use Class C3.

2.3 The particular details of both physical works and the nature of the units to be provided have been approved by the planning permissions previously quoted. The key issue to consider therefore is whether granting permission for C3 uses represents any significant change in circumstances which might lead to a different conclusion being reached on the acceptability of the proposal. We note that the application site is located within a predominantly residential area and indeed that the conservation area, at the boundary of which it sits, is predominantly residential in terms of its history and character. Section 9 of the adopted Local Plan "Housing" first sets out the 'challenge' facing the Local Plan and among the key bullet points of the challenge is:

"Meeting the accommodation needs of children and vulnerable adults".

2.4 The policy solution is to ensure that the mixture and type of housing is appropriate. Policies H4 and H5 permit residential development on non-allocated sites provided they meet a series of criteria. The location of the application site satisfies all the relevant criteria.

2.5 Policy H6 requires proposals to include a mix of house types to help create mixed and balanced communities with homes capable of being adapted to meet changing needs of the population. In this case the proposal is for a specific development designed to meet very particular needs and so it does contribute to the objective to meet broad housing needs.

2.6 It is understood that the specialist support at the scheme will be delivered by the national organisation "Aspirations" who have been involved in the development of this scheme and who have also engaged with the Metropolitan Borough Council. They advise that:

"Currently there is insufficient provision of intensive supported living across Barnsley and the neighbouring South and West Yorkshire commissioning areas. The Barnsley commissioners have discussed an area of need that the service proposed at Victoria Road could meet. The support Aspirations would offer would be to meet the community support needs of people with a learning disability and/or mental health, complex support needs – provided by staff support 24hours a day".

2.7 Following the involvement of Aspirations with the Borough Council the senior commissioning manager at the Council, Alison Rumbol, has stated as follows:

"To confirm that Victoria Road project has been regularly discussed with myself as local commissioner and supports the commissioning intentions and strategy of Barnsley.

The project will support the local area to meet the needs of a small group of people who are most complex and challenging. However, as Barnsley is unlikely to have a large local need for this sort of provision, TCP colleagues and neighbouring authorities may also have a need to use this facility. This would not be viewed negatively – as long as the needs of Barnsley people remained a key priority and the arrangements for crisis situations and ongoing originating teams input and support were clear and agreed”.

- 2.8 The new property is reasonably accessible to Barnsley town centre by using public transport or by foot so that residents could be accompanied on visits to a range of facilities if appropriate. There are also facilities nearby on Huddersfield Road including a chemist and surgery (within a quarter of a mile of the application site).
- 2.9 It is envisaged that the proposed apartments will be built in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations 1991 “Access and Facilities for the Disabled” and so will be designed to be wholly appropriate for the community for whom the premises are designed. Importantly each of the apartments will be fully self-contained so that residents can achieve appropriate independence, albeit 24 hour support will be available for them. It is clear that this form of supported living development is not an institution and so falls within Use Class C3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended as that definition includes:
- “Dwellings for individuals, families and not more than six people living together as a single household”.**
- 2.10 The residents of the accommodation will not be living as single households but will be living separately and independently, albeit having the benefit of common support as required. Specialised supported living requires the Registered Provider to grant an Assured Tenancy, which is only possible under use class C3.
- 2.11 More generally, the application proposals are consistent with many of the general objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 by maximising use of previously developed land and also through the restoration of active uses for heritage assets such as this building within a conservation area. The building and the site have become degraded and semi-derelict in some regards and so bringing them back into active and beneficial use clearly represents sustainable development.

- 2.12 The proposed design for the refurbishment of the main property and the construction of the additional single storey apartments have already been approved by the local planning authority and so it can be taken that it has been concluded that, given the current condition of the property, they enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.13 The development will meet current energy requirements and so again will further the objectives for sustainable development. The parking provided will be at a level considered appropriate for the use and for possible visitors. Secure open spaces are provided so that access to these can be obtained safely for residents.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The application proposal is a consolidation of two previous planning permissions on the site and also seeks to confirm the appropriate Use Class. This is the only difference from those approvals. The use is C3 as the individual apartments meet the required criteria. It is also important to note that to deliver the funding required for the development of such specialist housing with all that it entails in terms of provision of facilities, a C3 permission is required. Given the site location and its history and the character of the immediate area, there is no reason why a C3 permission should not be granted. Indeed, examination of the on-line planning application records made available by the District Council confirms that there has been, for example, planning permission granted in March 2018 on land adjacent to Enterprise House at 34 Victoria Road for a building with eight apartments. The application records show a series of similar permissions within the conservation area.

3.2 We would finally refer again to the Victoria Road Conservation Area Appraisal as referenced in the accompanying Heritage Statement. The appraisal states as follows:

"5.6 The views along Victoria Road are dominated at each end by two impressive buildings...

5.6 At the other end of the street, Westfield House provides a grand landmark at its junction with Sackville Street. Built in 1876 by William Munford for client Mr J H Watson, at the time the bank manager for the Wakefield & Barnsley Union Bank, it is of fine quality, two storeys with attics, and built of coarse sandstone. It has a low pitched, hipped roof with parapets, and covered with Welsh slates. Although currently vacant and in need of extensive maintenance, the building still provides a significant visual landmark. This is also largely due to its extensive and mature grounds and its position at the corner of Victoria Road and Sackville Street".

3.3 Improvement works to the former house itself will therefore self-evidently enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The approved position of the additional apartments do not impinge on the extensive grounds between the main property and either Victoria Road or Sackville Street.

3.4 In conclusion, we believe that the application proposals are consistent with all relevant policies and will make a positive contribution to both the community and built environment in this part of Barnsley and indeed in the wider area as the comments from the commissioning manager indicate.