

Colin Harvey
45 Nightingale Road
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
SG5 1RE

Tom Rea
Planning Department
North Herts District Council


Re: Planning Application PP-13443898
Andersons House, Florence Street, Hitchin, SG5 1RA

Dear Mr Rea,

I am writing to oppose and formally comment on the planning application for Andersons House, which proposes a change of use from a care home to supported hostel accommodation. While I acknowledge the important role of supported accommodation, I wish to raise concerns regarding the potential impacts on the local community.

1. Need

The application does not adequately address the issue of the need for elderly accommodation, for which the site is ideal in terms of points a, b, c and d in Policy HS4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. Wouldn't it be better to keep Andersons House as a residence for the elderly rather than lose this provision and need to develop it elsewhere? The argument put forward by the applicant is weak: "The local plan supports the provision of sheltered accommodation [the current use of Anderson House] but does not resist it."

However, I request that certain conditions be imposed if the application were to be approved.

2. Flexibility

The applicant asks for sui generis planning permission that grants them "maximum flexibility". I strongly oppose this. Sui generis planning permission should be clear and specific for ONLY a particular purpose. Should they wish to make any changes, they should be required to make another planning application.

3. Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour

Given the nature of supported accommodation, there are concerns over potential anti-social behaviour affecting community safety. I request the following conditions to prevent such issues:

- **The number of residents should not be increased from 65.** A change of use from and old people's home to a homeless shelter will put an immense strain on the local community. To also increase the number of residents will exacerbate this to the point that our safety will be compromised.
- **24/7 on-site staffing** with at least 2 staff present at all times.
- **CCTV** on all the property's boundaries.

- **Restricted Access to Southern Boundary:** To minimize potential behavioural disturbances to the neighbouring properties, residents should not be permitted in the area between the building and the fence along the southern boundary. This area should be marked as off-limits to residents to minimize noise, privacy, and safety concerns for adjacent properties.

These measures would reduce the likelihood of crime, disruptive behaviour and align with planning policies focused on community safety and residential amenity.

4. Noise and Disturbance

A hostel will bring increased foot traffic, and communal areas could contribute to noise in a quiet residential area. To mitigate this, I respectfully request the following conditions:

- **Require frosted glazing** on all windows facing the southern boundary of the property to maintain privacy and safety for neighbouring residents.
- **Restrictions on communal outdoor spaces** during late-night hours, ideally preventing usage between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

These measures would help maintain the peaceful character of the area in line with relevant planning policies regarding noise and amenity protection.

5. Traffic and Parking Management

An influx of residents may cause parking congestion in the local Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). To prevent strain on local parking:

- **Prohibit on-street parking permits** for hostel residents, ensuring that the CPZ remains effective for local residents.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me if further clarification on any of these points would be helpful.

Yours faithfully,

Colin Harvey

