



PLANNING STATEMENT

50 Moss Way, Hitchin, SG5 2QP

Job Ref: 25/030

Date: August 2025



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PETER GEORGE TOWN PLANNING



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APPENDIX 1: Appeal Decision Letter Ref. APP/B3410/W/22/3291205

APPENDIX 2: Appeal Decision Ref. Ref. APP/B0230/W/24/3338531



Section 1: Introduction & Background

- 1.1 We have been instructed by 5ab Care Ltd (the Applicant) to prepare and submit a planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council (the Council) for the change of use and extension of the existing dwelling (Use Class C3 (a)) to use as a children's home (Use Class C2) for up to two children.
- 1.2 This statement explains the proposals, sets out relevant local and national planning policy and ultimately makes the case for why planning permission should be granted.

Planning History

- 1.3 Planning application ref. 25/01134/FP granted 10 July 2025 for the *“Change of use of the existing dwelling from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to use as a children's home for up to three children (Use Class C2). Two storey side extension and front porch canopy following the part demolition of the existing garage including bin and cycle stores, installation of additional front hardstanding and provision of three parking spaces.”*



- 1.4 Following the grant of planning permission, the applicant has reconsidered the proposals and decided to proceed with an alternative proposal that involves a much smaller extension and a reduction in the scale of the proposed children's home from three children to two.



Section 2: Analysis of the Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application property is one half of a semi-detached pair of dwellings. It is situated on Moss Way, which is located within Westmill, a residential area within the north-western part of Hitchin.

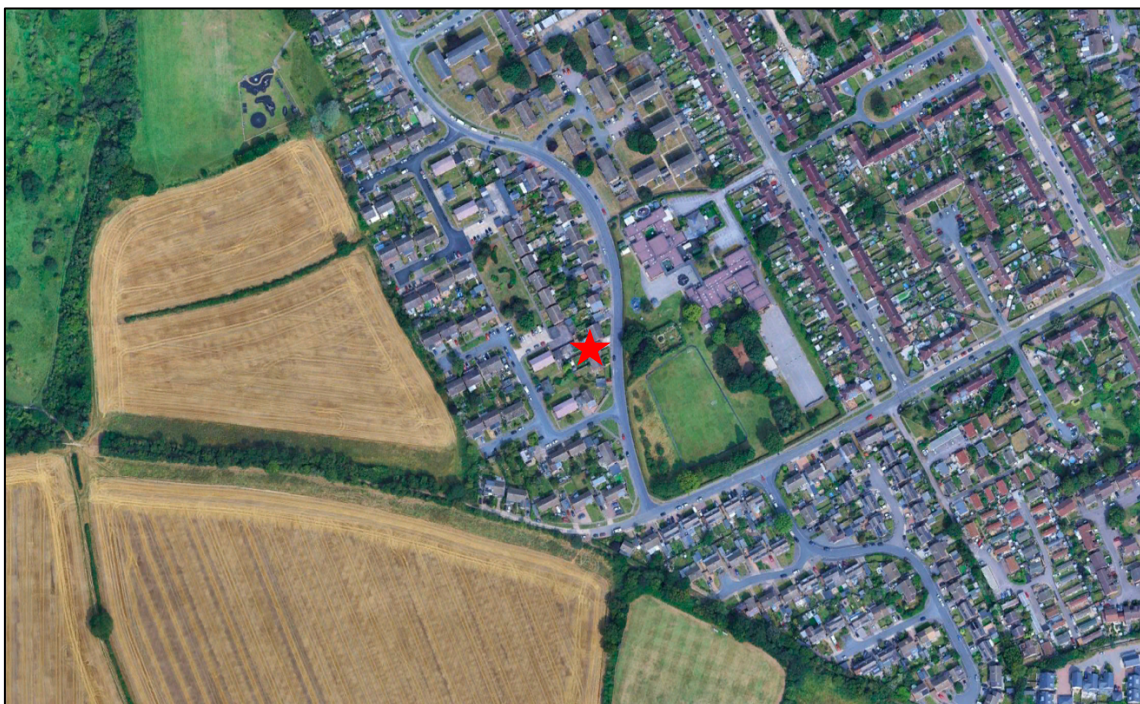


Figure 1 - Site Location

- 2.2 The application property is of masonry construction with a tiled roof. The property has a single garage to the front (shared with no.48). The property has a hardstanding to the front of the garage providing parking for one car. A second parking space can be accommodated within the integral garage.
- 2.3 The property has a small residential garden area to the front and rear of the existing dwelling.



- 2.4 The application site is located within walking distance of a range of local community facilities, shops and services including schools, convenience store, doctors' surgery, pharmacy, public open space, and a range of public transport options.



Section 3: The Development Proposal

3.1 The development proposal can be described as follows:

“Single-storey side extension following the part-demolition of the existing garage in order to facilitate the change of use of the existing dwelling from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to use as a children's home for up to two children (Use Class C2). Associated bin and cycle stores and installation of driveway to front.”

3.2 In this case, the proposed C2 use would operate as follows:

- The children’s home would provide accommodation for up to, but no more than, **two children** aged between 7 and 18. The children would be cared for by trained carers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
- The children would be permanent residents of the care home with up to three carers working at the property during daytime hours and two usually staying overnight at the property. A house manager will also be present 3-4 days a week between the hours of 9-5.
- The carers would work on a regular shift pattern in order to provide continuity with the children and create a family environment. The



children are expected to attend school during term-time and would otherwise largely be expected to have a social life similar to other children of a similar age.

- Care would be given in a communal environment with the children and their carers sharing facilities in a manner akin to a family unit.
- It is anticipated that children would be cared for on a medium to long-term basis to assist with integration with the local community and to build strong relationships with the carers.
- The children's home would be registered with OFSTED as a home for children with emotional & behavioural difficulties (EBD) and/or learning difficulties. The registration process is a rigorous one, with the ongoing operation of the home closely monitored by OFSTED.
- Each child would have their own bedroom. Dedicated space is provided for staff including an office/sleep-in space.

3.3 The ethos behind the Applicant's intended operations of this Property would be for the residence to provide an environment as close as practically possible to normal family life in order to ensure that the children can live a life of normality in the local community. This approach can offer a better environment in comparison to larger institutions as they enable individual needs to be met and allow the children to integrate into their



community and live as equal citizens. As a consequence, the structure of the household is designed to ensure that the building functions as close as possible to a typical family dwelling.

Proposed Extensions and Alterations

- 3.4 Proposed is a single-storey side and front extension. The proposed would extend the full depth of the existing dwelling and would have a width of approximately 2.77m. The proposed pitched roof would extend across to cover the existing front porch.

- 3.5 It is proposed to extend the existing driveway to create a parking area for three cars. The driveway would have a permeable surface and would, ordinarily, be permitted development.



Section 4: Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The Government policies on different aspects of planning are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework).
- 4.2 The relevant sections of the Framework are as follows:
- Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
 - Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
 - Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
 - Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Development Plan

- 4.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.”

- 4.4 The development plan context for the planning application is provided by:



- North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

4.5 The following policies are considered relevant to the consideration of this application:

Strategic Policies

- Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
- Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport
- Policy SP8: Housing
- Policy SP9: Design & Sustainability
- Policy SP10: Healthy Communities

Development Management Policies

- Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters
- Policy T2: Parking
- Policy D1: Sustainable Design
- Policy D3: Protecting Living Conditions
- Policy HS3: Housing Mix
- Policy HS4: Supported, Sheltered and Older Persons Housing

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD September 2011
- Design SPD July Parking



Section 5: Planning Analysis

Principle

- 5.1 The principle of the change of use of the property to a privately run children's home has been established by virtue of the grant of planning permission ref. 25/01134/FP. Accordingly, the principle of the change of use should not be in question.

Detailed Planning Issues

- 5.2 As set out above, it is considered that the proposed change of use of the existing dwelling to use as a children's home would be acceptable in principle. The detailed planning issues are as follows and discussed in the following paragraphs:

- The suitability of the proposed accommodation.
- The effect on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The effect on the character and appearance of the area.
- The effect on the safe operation of the adjacent highway.

The Suitability of the Proposed Accommodation

- 5.3 As covered in broad terms above, the application property is currently in residential use and would continue to provide a suitable environment for



intended occupants. The extended property would have a sufficient internal area and private garden to serve the needs to the occupants.

The Effect on the Living Conditions of Neighbouring Properties

Proposed Change of Use

- 5.4 The application site is situated within a primarily residential area and the children's home is proposed to operate on a similar basis to the existing residential property. As such, we do not consider that the proposed use would cause any material impacts on the living conditions of neighbouring residential properties due to noise, disturbance or any other related effects.
- 5.5 That being said, we are aware that these types of applications can attract local concern due to a perceived threat or concern regarding anti-social behaviour and other noise/disturbance created by potential residents of the home. Firstly, the home will be regulated by Ofsted ensuring that it will operate in accordance with its regulations and requirements. Secondly, the children will be looked after by trained carers who will themselves report to a house manager.
- 5.6 It is further noted that, as per the inspector's considerations relating to an appeal decision for a children's home in Newborough (appeal decision



attached as **Appendix 1**) that *“it cannot be presumed that potential occupants of the care home would behave in an anti-social manner or increase opportunities for crime and fear of crime”* and that *“should any specific matters in respect of crime or anti-social behaviour arise, these could be investigated and addressed by the authorities responsible for regulating the care home and/or the police.”*

- 5.7 In other words, sufficient safeguards exist to control the use and ensure that the proposed use of the property as a children’s home would not give rise to any harmful impacts on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.

Proposed Extension

- 5.8 In terms of the proposed extension, this has been designed in order to be sympathetic to the existing dwelling and to ensure that it would not be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring properties in terms of its size or positioning.

The Effect on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 5.9 The proposed extension would have a pitched roof to match the existing and would otherwise have a design and be constructed to accord with the



design, character and form of the existing dwelling. The flank wall of the extension would be set off the boundary with no.48 in order to ensure that a sense of spaciousness is retained between neighbouring dwellings.

- 5.10 Ultimately, the proposed extension would have a design, form appearance in keeping with the character of the existing and it is considered that the proposed would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- 5.11 The extended driveway would involve the provision of a permeable surface within the site frontage. This would be unobjectionable in design terms and is as per that approved under application ref. 25/01134/FP.
- 5.12 Proposed bin and cycle stores are to be provided to the rear of the property. These would be modest structures not out of place in a residential context.

The Effect on the Safe Operation of the Adjacent Highway

- 5.13 The proposed involves an extension to the existing driveway in order to accommodate two additional parking spaces within the site frontage. In



total, three parking spaces would therefore be delivered in association with the proposed development.

5.14 It is considered that three spaces would be sufficient to serve a small children's home of this nature and would moreover be compliant with the Council's parking standards for C2 uses which requires 1 space per five residents bed spaces plus 1 space per 2 staff. Moreover, there is unrestricted on-street parking available along Moss Way to accommodate any additional visitors parking.

5.15 In addition, the property is located within the urban area a short distance from a range of essential services, facilities and public transport links meaning that there are a range of other modes of transport that could be used by staff and visitors to the site.

5.16 A small cycle store is proposed to be situated within the curtilage of the property to encourage more sustainable forms of transport in compliance with the Council's strategy to achieve more choice in terms of sustainable transport.

Trip Generation



- 5.17 The proposed development would operate in much the same manner as that of a family dwelling with children requiring transport to and from school and other after-school hobbies and activities. There would be visitors to the property, but these would be strictly controlled by management and would not be as regular as they might be if the property was occupied as a family dwelling.
- 5.18 In all, it is not considered that the level of trip-generation associated with the proposed use of the dwelling as children's home would have a materially greater impact than if occupied as a family dwelling.



Section 6: Summary & Conclusions

- 6.1 This statement supports an application for the change of use and extension of the existing dwelling to use as a children's home for up to two children.
- 6.2 National and local policy encourages the provision of housing for different groups in the community and there is clearly a need to provide suitable housing for vulnerable children in this area. Moreover, the proposed is situated within a sustainable location within the defined settlement area of Hitchin. Accordingly, the proposed change of use should be acceptable in principle as it would meet an identified need.
- 6.3 Regarding the detailed considerations, it is considered that the proposed use of the property as a children's home would have a similar impact to that of a typical C3 dwellinghouse (its current authorised use) and could therefore operate without detriment to the surrounding environment, the living conditions of neighbouring properties and the safe operation of the adjacent highway.



6.4 Accordingly, and in the absence of any material planning reasons to the contrary, it is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.



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