



29 Bearton Road
Hitchin
SG5 1UE
10 November 2024

NHC Planning
Letchworth Garden City

Dear Sirs

24/02173/FP Anderson House, Florence Street – Change of use to hostel for 86 homeless people

Hitchin Forum wishes to object to this proposal. In our view its scale makes it unneighbourly & wholly inappropriate in the proposed location. It's just too big, and unfair to impose it on this quiet residential area. It would be fine in a city centre perhaps, but not in a quiet Hitchin residential street.

We query the demand for this number of homeless places in Hitchin. The current Hitchin Haven accommodates up to 17 individuals – the proposed facility appears to be capable of accommodating 5 times as many. According to the Statement of Need and Management, Clause 5.20, there are currently only 6 young people from North Herts on a waiting list for the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme.

In our view the Statement of Need and Management is almost wholly directed to the proposed residents and staff, and requires expanding to include the safety and well-being of neighbours.

There is another aspect. It looks like NHC have actively sought out this new use for Anderson House, and if so, how are they independent when acting as the local planning authority? No wonder a neighbour says that he was told by Planning that the application is likely to succeed. In what way can NHC be dispassionate in dealing with this application?

We also find it difficult to credit the loss of all these elderly care home places when the elderly population is increasing so much. We are told that Anderson House is no longer suitable for elderly people, however it was purpose designed and built only 40 years ago.

Yours faithfully

Neil Dodds

On behalf of Hitchin Forum

CC Hitchin Councillors