



PLANNING DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Change of use from care home (use class C2) to supported hostel accommodation (sui generis), provision of additional car parking, refuse/recycling store and cycle storage

**Andersons House
Florence Street
Hitchin
SG5 1RA**

27th September 2024



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Reference	Andersons House, Hitchin, SG5 1RA
Date	27.9.24 FINAL
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application at Andersons House, Florence Street, Hitchin on behalf of One YMCA, for:

“Change of use from care home (use class C2) to supported hostel accommodation (sui generis), provision of additional car parking, refuse/recycling store and cycle storage”

- 1.2 The planning application is supported by the following documents:

- Planning application form and completed Certificate B
- Statement of Housing Need and Management prepared by One YMCA
- Flood Risk Assessment prepared by RMA Environmental
- Existing and Proposed Plans prepared by LSI Architects, as follows:

Plan Name	Reference
Site Location Plan	24159-LSI-AAA-XX-DR-A-1170-S2-P03
Existing Site Plan	24159-LSI-AAA-XX-DR-A-1180-S2-P03
Proposed Site Plan	24159-LSI-AAA-XX-DR-A-1181-S2-P04
Existing Ground Floor Plan	24159-LSI-AAA-00-DR-A-1200-S2-P03
Existing First Floor Plan	24159-LSI-AAA-01-DR-A-1201-S2-P03
Existing Elevations Sheet 01	24159-LSI-AAA-ZZ-DR-A-1250-S2-P01
Existing Elevations Sheet 02	24159-LSI-AAA-ZZ-DR-A-1251-S2 P01
Proposed Ground Floor General Arrangement	24159-LSI-AAA-00-DR-A-1300-S2-P03
Proposed First Floor General Arrangement	24159-LSI-AAA-01-DR-A-1301-S2-P03
Proposed Elevations Sheet 01	24159-LSI-AAA-ZZ-DR-A-1350-S2-P02
Proposed Elevations Sheet 02	24159-LSI-AAA-ZZ-DR-A-1351-S2-P01

- 1.3 The planning application fee of £648 has been paid online.
- 1.4 We trust this submission provides sufficient detail on the proposed development, but should you require clarification on any matter, please contact Louise Morton on 01491 571 123 or lm@quadranttowntownplanning.com.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Andersons House is located on the eastern side of Florence Street, close to its junction with Nightingale Road.



Figure 1: Site Location of Andersons House (Google Aerial Photograph)

- 2.2 The property comprises a two storey brick and tile clad building which was constructed in the early 1980s.



Figure 2: Andersons House, viewed from Florence Street

- 2.3 Vehicular access is provided from Florence Street and the property is supported by some 19 car parking spaces. A secondary vehicular access to the south of the property provides emergency access, also onto Florence Street.



Figure 3: Vehicular access and emergency access from Florence Street

- 2.4 Until recently, Andersons House was a sheltered housing scheme providing small self-contained units and support facilities for elderly people. Internally, the property provided 46 flats (for single or double occupancy) 2 x 3 bedroom houses and a range of communal areas – lounge, dining room, laundry room – for use by residents, alongside staff rooms and offices. The property is currently occupied by Live In Guardians and provides temporary accommodation for some 65 individuals.
- 2.5 The floorspace of the property extends to some 3,210 sq m on a site of some 0.52 ha.



Figure 4: Internal layout and facilities at Andersons House



Figure 5: Self-contained flat within Andersons House

- 2.6 Externally, the property provides extensive grounds, with landscaping, seating areas and a pond.



Figure 6: Landscaped gardens

- 2.7 The property lies within a residential area with Florence Street being characterised by two storey terraced houses. To the east of the property lie the rear gardens of dwellings on King Street. To the south lie the rear gardens of properties on Nightingale Road.
- 2.8 Florence Street is designated as a residential Controlled Parking Zone, which restricts on-street parking to those with a residents permit and visitors for short periods of time.
- 2.9 Andersons House is not listed nor does the site fall within a Conservation Area. Directly opposite lies the locally listed former Salvation Hall.
- 2.10 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at very low risk of flooding from rivers or sea, as shown on the plan below.

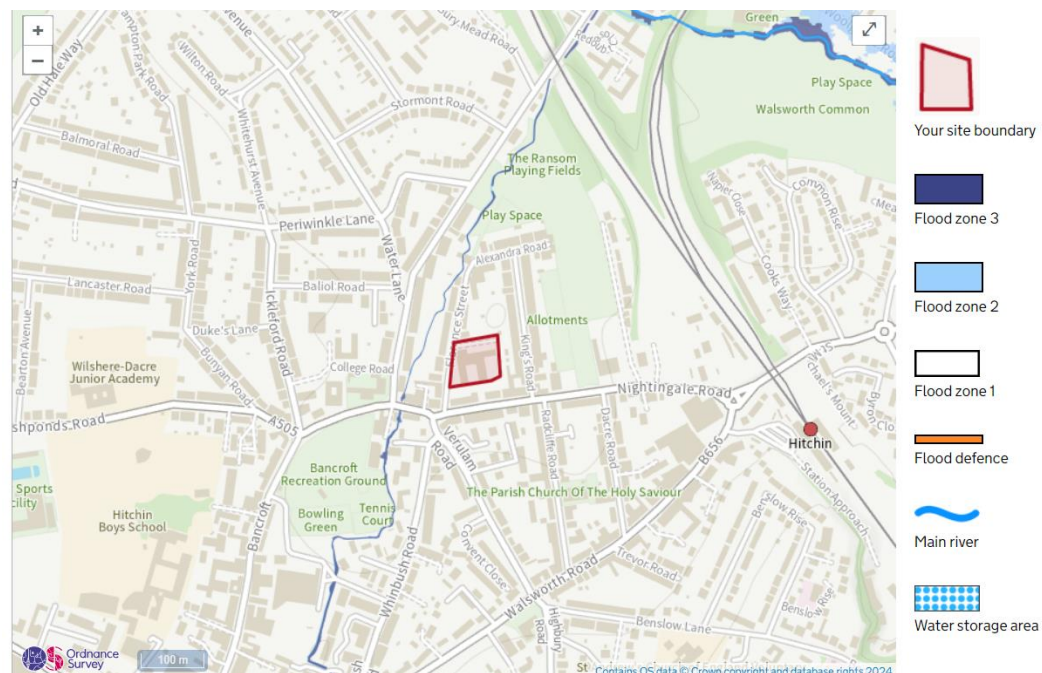


Figure 7: Flood Risk Map (Source: Environment Agency)

- 2.11 The site is located in an area which is at high to medium risk of surface water flooding, as shown on the plan below.

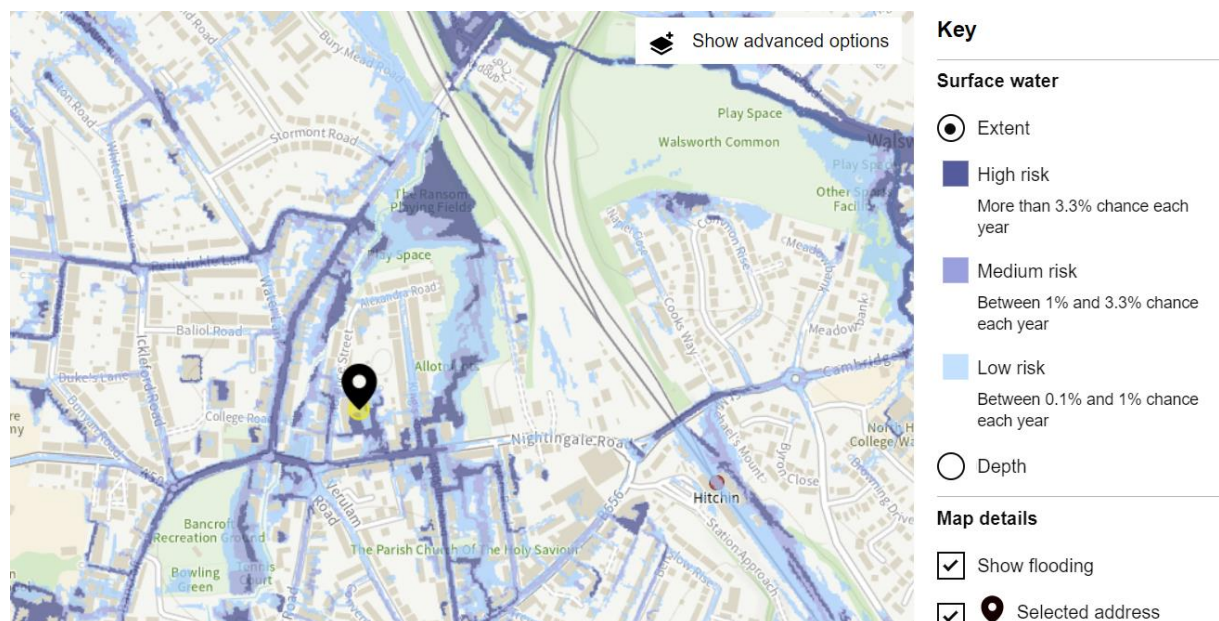


Figure 8: Surface Water Flooding (Source: Environment Agency)

- 2.12 The site is well located in respect of local facilities. It is a short walk to Sainsbury's and thereon into Hitchin town centre. For trips further afield, the site benefits from good public transport – Nightingale Road/the A505 is an established bus route and Hitchin train station is half a mile away.

3.0 Planning History

3.1 The relevant planning history details are set out below.

Reference No.	Description	Decision
81/01314/1	Outline application for the erection of 47 flats	Approved 3.11.81

3.2 Due to the age of the planning consent, a copy of the planning permission is not available. It appears from a historic file note dated March 1983 that the scheme was subsequently amended to provide 48 units comprising 46 flats and 2 houses.

3.3 It is not clear whether the consent was subject to any conditions that restricted the occupancy of the flats to elderly persons, but the layout of the building – as seen on site - indicates small self-contained units, with communal facilities.

3.4 There have been no further planning applications in relation to the property since the original consent was granted. The property has continued to operate as a sheltered housing scheme offering flexible care for elderly individuals for the last 40 years with no external changes.

3.5 It is considered that the property falls within the Use Class C2 Residential Institution. While YMCA could operate the site to deliver its supported accommodation services under this existing Use Class – as it provides ‘care’ – because the charity wishes to have maximum flexibility to respond to local housing needs, a change to hostel use (*sui generis*) is proposed.

4.0 Proposed Development

- 4.1 The proposed development comprises the conversion of the existing building from sheltered housing to hostel use. The hostel will provide supported accommodation and will be operated by One YMCA and details of the organisation and how it operates are set out in the Housing Need and Management Statement submitted with the planning application.
- 4.2 Externally, the change of use will comprise very few changes and the external appearance of the property will largely remain the same.

Access and Car Parking

- 4.3 Vehicular access will remain as currently shown from Florence Street to the car park which will be retained.
- 4.4 An additional 3 car parking spaces are proposed, taking the total to 22 spaces.

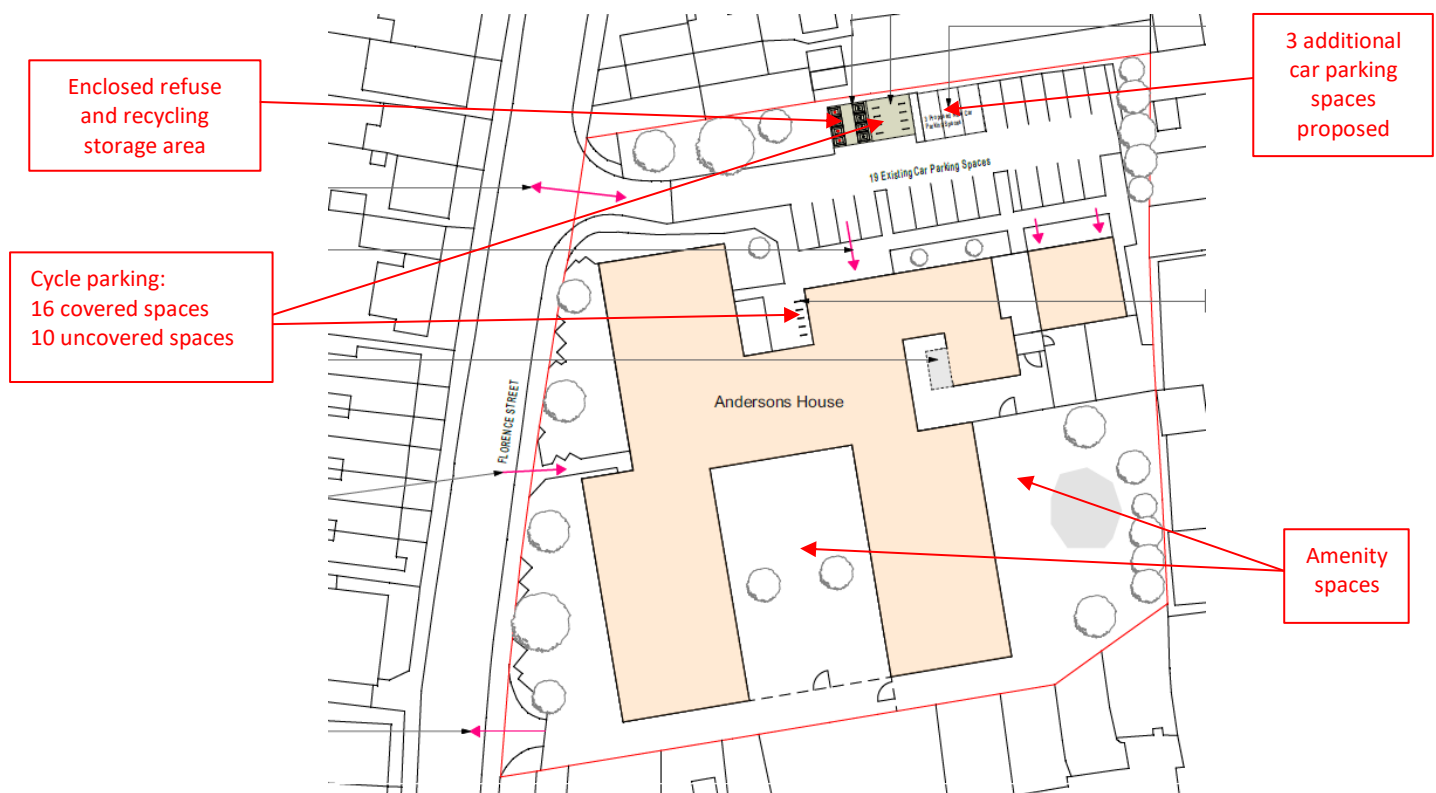


Figure 9: Proposed Site Layout (LSI)

- 4.5 A slight rearrangement within the car park is proposed in order to accommodate refuse and recycling within a dedicated area and cycle parking.
- 4.6 Two points of pedestrian access are proposed (as existing): one from Florence Street and the other from the car park; both will be supported by a reception area to monitor access to the building.

Cycle Parking

- 4.7 Cycle parking is proposed within the car park where some 16 spaces are proposed within a covered

shelter accommodating Sheffield stands. The location is accessible and will benefit from natural surveillance.

- 4.8 A further 10 uncovered spaces are proposed adjacent to the entrance to the building, which will be available for short stay parking and/or visitors.

Refuse and Recycling

- 4.9 Storage for refuse and recycling is proposed on the northern side of the car park within a dedicated enclosure.
- 4.10 A total of 8 bins will be provided as follows:
- 3 x Euro 1,100 litre bins for refuse
 - 5 x Euro 1,100 litre bins for recycling
- 4.11 Refuse and recycling will be collected by a private contractor, Baxtors. Service vehicles will reverse into the site and exit in a forwards gear.

Amenity Space

- 4.12 The landscaped grounds around the building will be retained and they will provide amenity for the residents of the supported hostel accommodation. There will be a dedicated garden for young adults (18-25 years) and a separate garden for adults.
- 4.13 A maintenance schedule will be put in place to ensure appropriate management and upkeep of the grounds.
- 4.14 Internally, the property will provide two large lounge areas on the ground floor for residents. Each lounge will be supervised by staff.

Internal Layout

- 4.15 There will be a number of changes to the internal layout of the building in order to accommodate One YMCA's requirements.
- 4.16 On the Ground Floor, the communal areas – dining room and lounge – will be retained to support the proposed hostel use, but they will be separated to provide one area for 18-25 year olds and another for adults.

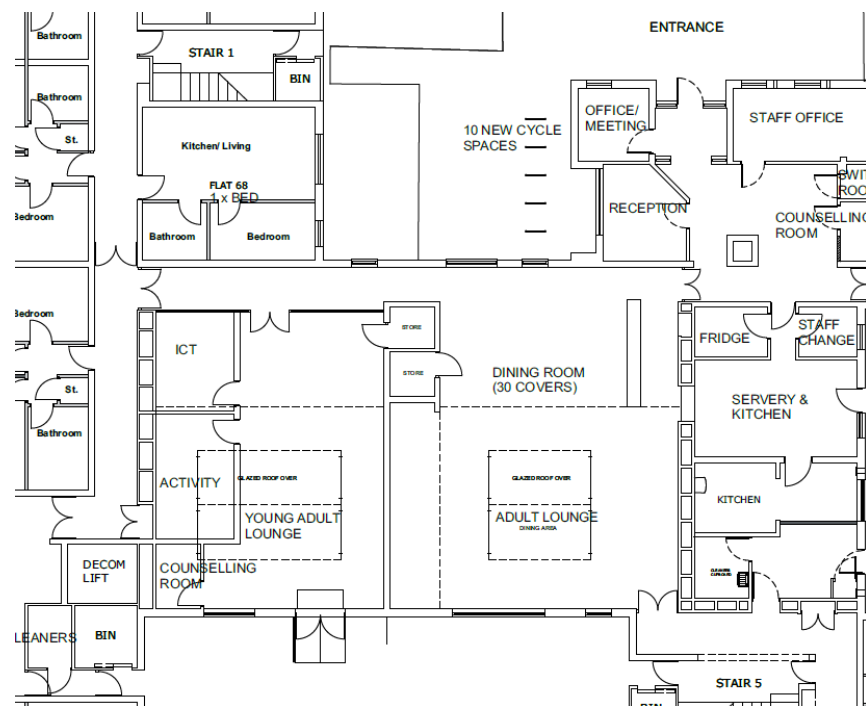


Figure 10: Extract from Proposed Ground Floor Layout showing communal and support areas (LSI)

- 4.17 Support areas on the Ground Floor – reception, staff offices, kitchen, laundry, boiler room – will all be retained, with the addition of counselling spaces.
- 4.18 On the First Floor, some areas will be repurposed. For example, the existing hair salon, guest bedroom and IT suite will be converted into office space to provide accommodation for support staff.
- 4.19 The layout of some of the individual flats will be amended to provide two separate bedrooms, through the conversion of the living room into a bedroom. This will facilitate double occupancy of some of the units. The kitchens and bathrooms within each flat will be retained.
- 4.20 The proposal will accommodate the following:
- Ground Floor: 4 x 1 bed units and 17 x 2 bed units = 38 individuals
 - First Floor: 10 x 1 bed units and 15 x 2 bed units = 40 individuals
 - Attached houses: 2 x 4 bed houses = 8 individuals
- 4.21 In total, therefore, the property will accommodate 86 people either on a single or shared basis.

5.0 One YMCA

- 5.1 The supported accommodation will be operated by One YMCA and the planning application is accompanied by a Housing Need and Management Statement.
- 5.2 One YMCA is a registered Housing Association (H4418) and Registered Charity (1102301), and as such the Company (4430743) is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and Charity Commission. The organisation has an annual revenue of around £27 million and directly employs over 400 and experienced staff, including centralised HR, finance, legal and ICT teams and our dedicated front line delivery teams.
- 5.3 The YMCA has been providing support, advice and accommodation to some of the most vulnerable members of society for over 176 years. Within Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, this is delivered by One YMCA (an independent federated organisation) which provides supported housing services across 36 different sites, ranging from single occupancy and shared housing units, through to larger 24, 40, 140 and 200 bed supported hostel accommodation schemes.
- 5.4 In addition to providing specialist housing, One YMCA provides support to around 150,000 vulnerable individuals each year through a range of specialist services, delivered across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, such as counselling, domestic abuse and sexual violence support, early years education, youth work and youth mental health counselling, health and wellbeing activities and family services.
- 5.5 Within One YMCA's supported accommodation, support is directly aligned to the individual needs of residents on a person-centric basis, ensuring their journey towards independence and independent living is optimised. The One YMCA support model has been nationally and internationally recognised for its effectiveness and is already being successfully delivered throughout other parts of the country.
- 5.6 The challenges of meeting and supporting the needs of those facing homelessness and rough sleeping is a growing one. It presents a need to carefully balance the needs of those directly affected and also those in the communities in which they live. However, left unaddressed the social, financial and human costs can escalate dramatically. Ultimately risking a far greater cost and negative impact for all, including the opportunity loss of failing to support members of our communities to reach their full potential. Plus there is a significant human cost associated with homelessness.
- 5.7 One YMCA offers a specialist homelessness and rough sleeper prevention service which is in line with the award-winning Dynamic Pathway to Independence model which provides five interconnected stages to independence.

Housing Need

- 5.8 Within Hertfordshire there is a growing need to support young homeless individuals in particular, demonstrated by the following:
 - There were over 900 referrals of young people aged 16-25 to county wide homelessness advice and support services provided by Herts Young Homeless in 2022/23.
 - Over 2,400 nights of emergency 'crashpad' accommodation for 16-17 year olds were provided in 2022/23.
 - One YMCA data across c 700 bedspaces over the past few years demonstrates a growing trend towards younger and younger residents in its hostels, suggesting that provision of this type will become increasingly necessary.

- 5.9 There is significant need within North Herts to help vulnerable homeless individuals, especially young people aged 18-25 years who are at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping and with multiple support needs. In 2023 Hertfordshire County Council successfully applied for SHAP (Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme) funding to assist with the provision of supported accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping, with One YMCA identified as the delivery partner.
- 5.10 There is also a significant cohort of adults who remain homeless, having slipped through the system.
- 5.11 North Herts Council has a duty to provide accommodation to address homeless households. Whilst the demand has fallen since the end of the Covid 19 pandemic, it remains at a level which is not being met with around some 475 households requiring accommodation, of which single persons comprising some 220 (Source: HCLIC data and NHC case level analysis)
- 5.12 It is clear that demand outstrips supply and due to the shortage of temporary accommodation. Hotel placements are not a way forward.
- 5.13 Andersons House will assist in providing much needed supported hostel accommodation for young people and adults who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. It will provide the support these individuals need to work towards independent living.
- 5.14 In Hitchin, One YMCA's existing supported accommodation at 25 Nightingale Road (The Sanctuary), located around the corner from Andersons House, will continue to operate. Whilst funding has been secured from Homes England for the redevelopment of the site to provide a new hostel accommodating 23 homeless individuals, the scheme is under review, given the identification of Andersons House as a potential opportunity. Andersons House could accommodate a significantly larger number of homeless individuals – some 75 – and provides a greater level of amenity space for potential residents. As a conversion, it is also more financially viable than a new build scheme.

Management

- 5.15 The property will be managed by One YMCA's team which will include a number of Specialist Supported Housing Managers/Workers and Complex Needs Specialists in order to provide the right level of support for each resident.
- 5.16 Residents will stay for varying lengths of time depending on their needs; from 3 months to potentially a year or more. Each resident will be required to enter into a tenancy/licence agreement with One YMCA which clearly sets out the responsibilities of each. In addition, each resident is provided with a dedicated site-specific handbook. The handbook provides guidance and a range of useful information on things such as security, community rules, room inspections, repairs and maintenance, local amenities and transportation.
- 5.17 Alongside the specialist support team, the Andersons House will have the following measures in place:
- **Security:** provided through a combination of CCTV internally and externally, access controls to external doors and visible personnel.
 - **Health and safety:** One YMCA have partnered with Assurity to provide external and independent professional health and safety advice.
 - **Fire system:** the building will meet current fire regulations and a system will be monitored by on-site team in line with standard operating procedures. It will operate with an investigation delay process programmed in, in order to allow the on-site team to minimise false alarms.

- **Housekeeping:** residents will be responsible for cleaning their own rooms, including disposal of rubbish into the central waste / recycling area. The regular common areas, kitchen, lounge and communal areas will be cleaned on a daily / weekly basis as necessary. All common areas will be cleaned on a scheduled basis
- **Maintenance:** One YMCA utilise a specialist maintenance team across all of its properties within Hertfordshire to ensure the upkeep of all its buildings.
- **Behaviour management:** One YMCA is well versed in managing residents who may have experienced trauma in their lives. Our teams receive specialist 'Challenging Behaviour' training and are recruited specifically to support residents in this area of development. Staff at Andersons House will provide specialist support to ensure that residents are equipped with the necessary personal skills to work towards independence.
- **Community engagement:** most of our residents are local and working with the community is important in order to provide opportunities of engaging with the outside world in terms of employment, volunteering, fund raising and education. One YMCA actively seek out these opportunities for residents as part of their pathway to independence.

- 5.18 Utilising One YMCA's expertise, Andersons House will operate with established management policies and procedures in order to deliver appropriate support for homeless individuals, enabling them to move towards independence.

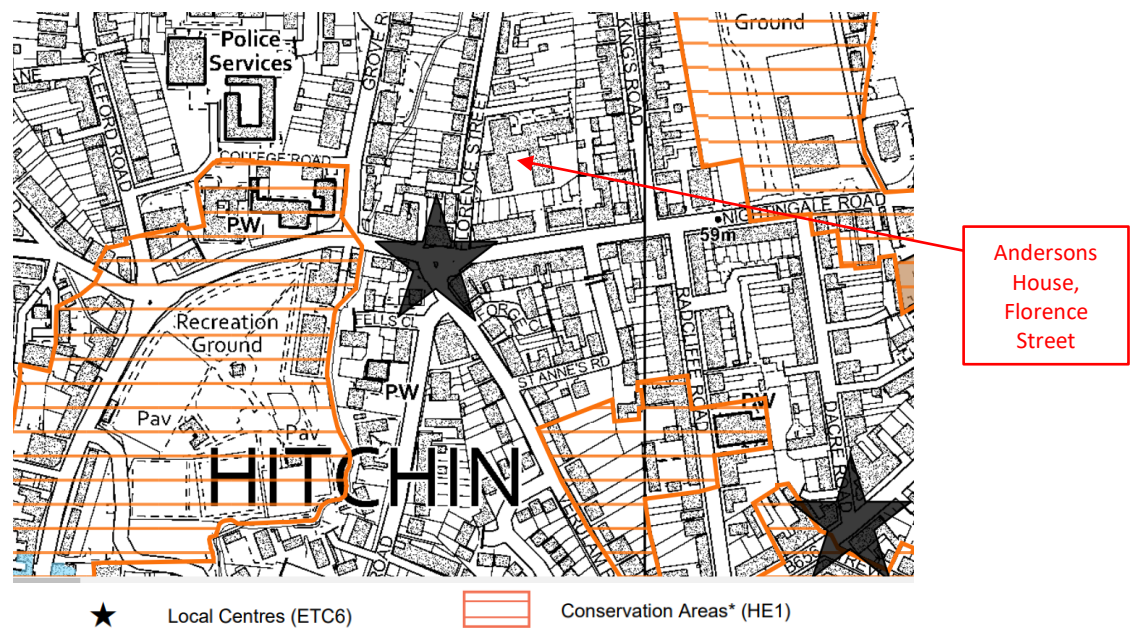
One YMCA Community Engagement

- 5.19 One YMCA is keen to share its plans for the use of Andersons House with the local community. It is proud of its history in the area and is pleased to share its proposals with neighbours and stakeholders to demonstrate its commitment to continuing to support vulnerable people in the local area.
- 5.20 Prior to the submission of the planning application, One YMCA has met with a number of stakeholders (Councillors, Homes England, Head of Housing at NHDC, HCC Children's Services) and communicated its desire to use Andersons House to provide supported accommodation for local individuals who are struggling to put a roof over their heads or have fallen on hard times and are vulnerable.
- 5.21 Matters raised through these initial discussions have included the need to provide additional car parking (3 additional car parking spaces are proposed, but site constraints, and policy mean that this is the maximum that can be achieved); the need for obscure glazing on the upper floors of the southern elevation to restrict overlooking (this is shown on the Proposed Elevations); and car park management (residents will generally not have cars and will be prevented from parking on Florence Street as it is in a Controlled Parking Zone).
- 5.22 Concerns were also raised regarding the potential for anti-social behaviour. The hostel will be managed by on-site staff. One YMCA has particular expertise in this area and has protocols and practices in place to manage the behaviour of its residents. All individuals are vetted and criminal record checks are undertaken. CCTV will be present both internally and externally around the hostel.
- 5.23 A representative from One YMCA attended NHDC's Cabinet meeting on 10th September 2024 to answer questions regarding the proposed scheme. The Council is very supportive of One YMCA and has committed some £388,300 to assist with the operation of the site, subject to all regulatory requirements being met.
- 5.24 One YMCA has also met with Helping Herts Homeless (HHH), a local charity with which it has close links, and HHH are fully supportive of the proposed development.

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- 5.25 Through a leaflet drop within the area, local residents have been invited to a community engagement meeting on 30th September 2024 at Our Lady Immaculate and St Andrew's Church and members of the One YMCA team will be available to answer questions about the scheme.

6.0 Planning Policy Compliance

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 advises that all applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The Development Plan comprises the strategic and development management policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, which was adopted in November 2022.



- 6.3 The subject site is shown without notation on proposal map of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. Neighbouring allocations include the designation of the Nightingale Road Local Centre and the Hitchin Conservation Area to the west of the site.
- 6.4 The site falls within the development boundary of Hitchin.

Principle of the proposed development

- 6.5 The principle of development is established through the existing building on the site. The proposed change of use will not alter the form, scale or massing of the existing building.
- 6.6 The existing use of the site is for sheltered housing. The Development Plan does not contain any policies which seek to protect sheltered housing or C2 uses and accordingly its loss to an alternative use would not be contrary to policy.
- 6.7 Whilst **Policy SP8 Housing** of the Local Plan seeks at g) to provide at least 350 bed spaces in suitable supported accommodation to meet the needs of those who cannot live in their own home, this is a permissive policy which does not resist the loss of elderly person housing.
- 6.8 Similarly, **Policy HS4 Supported, sheltered and older persons housing** is a permissive policy which does not resist the loss of sheltered housing.

- 6.9 Furthermore, there have been several new sheltered housing schemes in the district in the last few years and this target figure set out in Policy SP8 is expected to be exceeded.
- 6.10 The Local Plan therefore supports the provision of sheltered accommodation but does not resist its loss. It also requires elderly persons housing on schemes of 100 dwellings or more and such provision will come forward as part of larger strategic housing sites.
- 6.11 The North Herts Local Plan does not have any policies which specifically relate to hostels, but the strategic aims of the Plan seek to provide a range of type and tenure of housing to meet the needs of the District (**SOc1**). Supported hostel accommodation is one such type of tenure.
- 6.12 There is a significant need for affordable housing within the District. Policy SP8 Housing seeks 33% of all homes over the plan period as affordable for local needs with targets to deliver up to 40% affordable housing where viable. Housing waiting lists are long and unfortunately young people (18-25 years) and single adults are not a priority group for affordable housing. But also such housing does not provide the support needed for vulnerable individuals.
- 6.13 The proposed supported accommodation will meet an identified need to accommodate homeless individuals and make a valuable contribution towards housing in the area.
- 6.14 The statement submitted by One YMCA demonstrates the need for appropriate provision to be made for homeless individuals within North Herts, with a particular need for support to be provided, particularly to young adults. These vulnerable young people have typically dropped off the existing pathway because of lack of suitable support and the proposed scheme will address this.

Design and Sustainability

- 6.15 The proposed development is a change of use and few external changes are proposed to the property.
- 6.16 The Local Plan promotes good sustainable design. **Policy D1 Sustainable design** and **Policy SP9 Design and sustainability** support new development where it is well designed and responds positively to its local context. However, these policies apply to new schemes.
- 6.17 It is clear that the existing layout of the building lends itself to continued use for residential purposes in the form of a supported living scheme. Rooms are spacious with kitchens and bathrooms, allowing for privacy and independence, whilst at the same time the property provides a range of communal and support facilities.
- 6.18 The re-use of the property for residential purposes is highly sustainable in terms of resources and the scheme is supported by Homes England.
- 6.19 **Policy D1 Sustainable design** requires new development to take all reasonable opportunities to, inter alia:
- **Reduce energy consumption and waste:** in the short term, the proposed supported hostel accommodation will rely on existing mechanical and electrical services within the building. However, as these reach the end of their operational life, the opportunity will be taken to replace them with more energy efficient measures.
 - **Retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting:** all existing planting at Andersons House will be retained and the extensive gardens will provide amenity space for the residents of the supported accommodation, as well as continued biodiversity benefits.
 - **Maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas:** the proposed hostel will be fully DDA compliant – lift, automatic doors, level

access outside. The layout works well in meeting the needs of the two groups of residents (18-25 years and adults) who will be housed at the property.

- ***Design out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour:*** this is a key part of the proposed development and One YMCA's internal protocols are set out in the Management Plan submitted with the application.

6.20 Accordingly, the proposed development meets North Herts' sustainability aims.

Ecological considerations

6.21 **Policy NE4 Biodiversity and geological sites** requires all new developments to deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity. As a change of use, however, the application is not subject to the requirements of biodiversity net gain (BNG). Notwithstanding this, as noted, all existing planting at the property will be retained. The pond will also be retained and the site therefore has potential to encourage flora, fauna and aquatic life.

6.22 Residents will be actively encouraged to become involved with the maintenance of the landscaped gardens at Andersons House, with opportunities for additional planting and growing vegetables, which will add to biodiversity.

Flood considerations

6.23 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency's flood mapping and is therefore not at risk of fluvial or sea flooding. However, it is identified as an area which is subject to surface water flooding, specifically the car park and the neighbouring streets of Florence Street and Nightingale Road

6.24 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment notes that the EA's mapping does not take into account existing highway drains on neighbouring streets and the level of surface water flooding is likely to be less than shown by the EA.

6.25 Furthermore, the proposed development comprises a change of use and will not alter flood patterns or surface water drainage in the area as the footprint of the building will not change.

Highways impact

6.26 The existing vehicular access arrangements at the property will be retained. **Policy T1 Assessment of transport matters** permits schemes which do not cause unacceptable impacts on the local highway network. The proposed supported accommodation use will operate within the existing highways layout and will not lead to capacity or highway safety problems.

6.27 The existing car park will be retained, but rearranged slightly to accommodate refuse/recycling storage and cycle parking. In respect of hostel use, **Appendix 4** of the Local Plan sets a maximum requirement of 3 car parking spaces/4 units. The site currently provides 19 car parking spaces which will be used for staff and visitors and this level accords with **Policy T2 Parking**.

6.28 However, in responding to concerns raised by councillors prior to the submission of the planning application, an additional 3 car parking spaces are proposed within the car park, taking the total provision to 22 spaces.

6.29 Based on empirical data from One YMCA's hostel in Welwyn Garden City, the provision of 22 car parking spaces will be more than sufficient to accommodate the anticipated demand from staff and

residents (should they own a car) at Andersons House. The 125 bed hostel in Welwyn had a peak car parking demand of 20 spaces. Applying this ratio to Andersons House would yield a requirement for 14 car parking spaces and the scheme provides well in excess of this amount.

- 6.30 Residents at the supported accommodation will not, for the most part, own cars. The location of the site is highly accessible and most residents and staff will therefore use public transport.
- 6.31 With regard to cycle parking the Local Plan requires a minimum of 1 space/3 units. The provision of 16 spaces within an enclosure within the car park, plus 10 short stay spaces, for the 48 units would therefore exceed the policy requirement.
- 6.32 Finally, **Policy SP6 Sustainable transport** confirms that the Council will encourage development in locations which enable sustainable journeys to be made to key services and facilities. Andersons House is located within a highly sustainable location, within close proximity to the town centre and public transport links by bus and rail providing opportunities for residents to access services and employment within the wider area.

Residential amenity

- 6.33 The proposed supported accommodation will provide appropriate amenity space internally and externally. Spacious lounge areas on the Ground Floor are available for residents to relax and socialise and the extensive landscaped gardens provide ample external space.
- 6.34 The layout of the existing building lends itself to supporting residents' needs. The flats are spacious and each bedroom has a window for daylight and fresh air. Corridors are light and airy with skylights providing additional daylight.
- 6.35 In respect of the relationship of the proposed supported hostel use on neighbouring residential amenity, **Policy D3 Protecting living conditions** requires new development not to cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. Andersons House is an established residential development and its layout provides an appropriate relationship with neighbouring residential properties.
- 6.36 In response to concerns raised by councillors prior to the submission of the planning application, obscure glazing is proposed on south facing windows at First Floor level to prevent overlooking into the rear gardens of properties on Nightingale Road.
- 6.37 One YMCA has extensive experience in running supported accommodation and has management procedures in place to ensure that the hostel operates appropriately having regard to its location within a residential area. As noted, the site provides significant areas of internal and external amenity space for residents thereby reducing the tendency for residents to 'hang out' on neighbouring streets.
- 6.38 Processes are in place to address behaviour, noise levels and anti-social activities. Access will be security controlled and the property will be covered by CCTV, both internally and externally.
- 6.39 Having regard to the above factors, it is considered that the hostel will not lead to an unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 There is an identified need to provide safe and supportive accommodation for homeless individuals within North Hertfordshire. One YMCA has secured funding from Homes England for the provision of specialist support accommodation for young people within the District. The proposed hostel will provide high-quality supported accommodation to enable individuals to get back on their feet.
- 7.2 The principle of residential accommodation on the site is established and the proposed conversion to supported hostel use will accord with the sustainability policies of the Local Plan through the repurposing of the existing building to provide supported residential accommodation.
- 7.3 The existing building lends itself to conversion to an alternative residential type of use. The proposed supported accommodation will provide good sized units and a range of communal facilities, alongside extensive external amenity space.
- 7.4 The site is in a highly accessible location, enabling residents to access local services and engage with the local community in a way which will enable them to move on in society.
- 7.5 One YMCA has a track record of providing supported accommodation for homeless individuals and has in place a package of measures on a stepped programme which will lead to independence. Measures are also in place to ensure the hostel will operate in a manner that does not lead to disturbance of neighbouring residents.
- 7.6 There are no planning policies within the Local Plan which safeguard existing C2 accommodation. The provision of hostel accommodation will relieve pressure on affordable housing waiting lists and provide accommodation for often excluded groups.
- 7.7 We trust that North Herts District Council will support this application.

Louise Morton
Quadrant Town Planning Ltd
27th September 2024



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