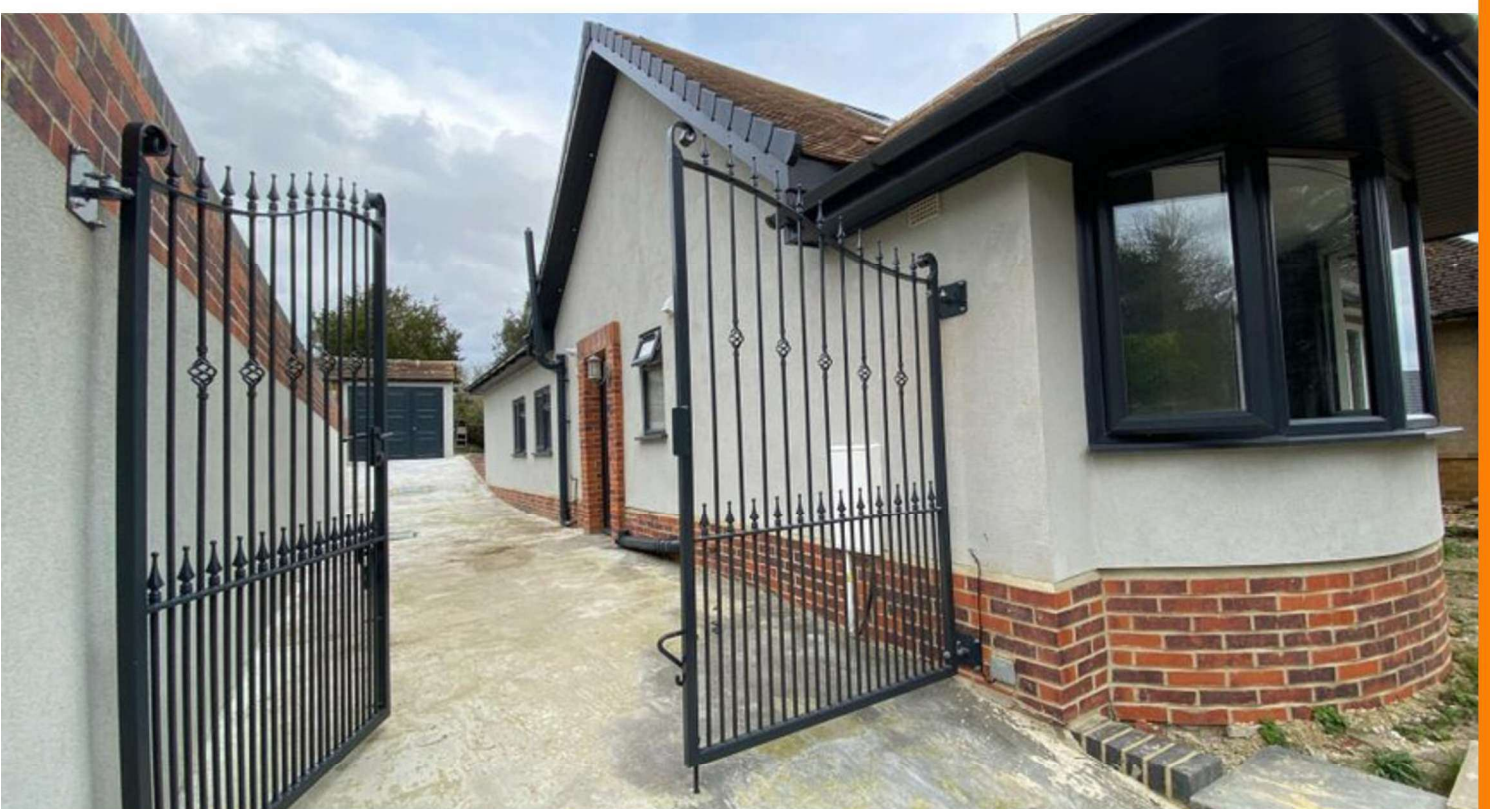


Supporting Planning Design and Access Statement

Proposal for Residential Children's Home

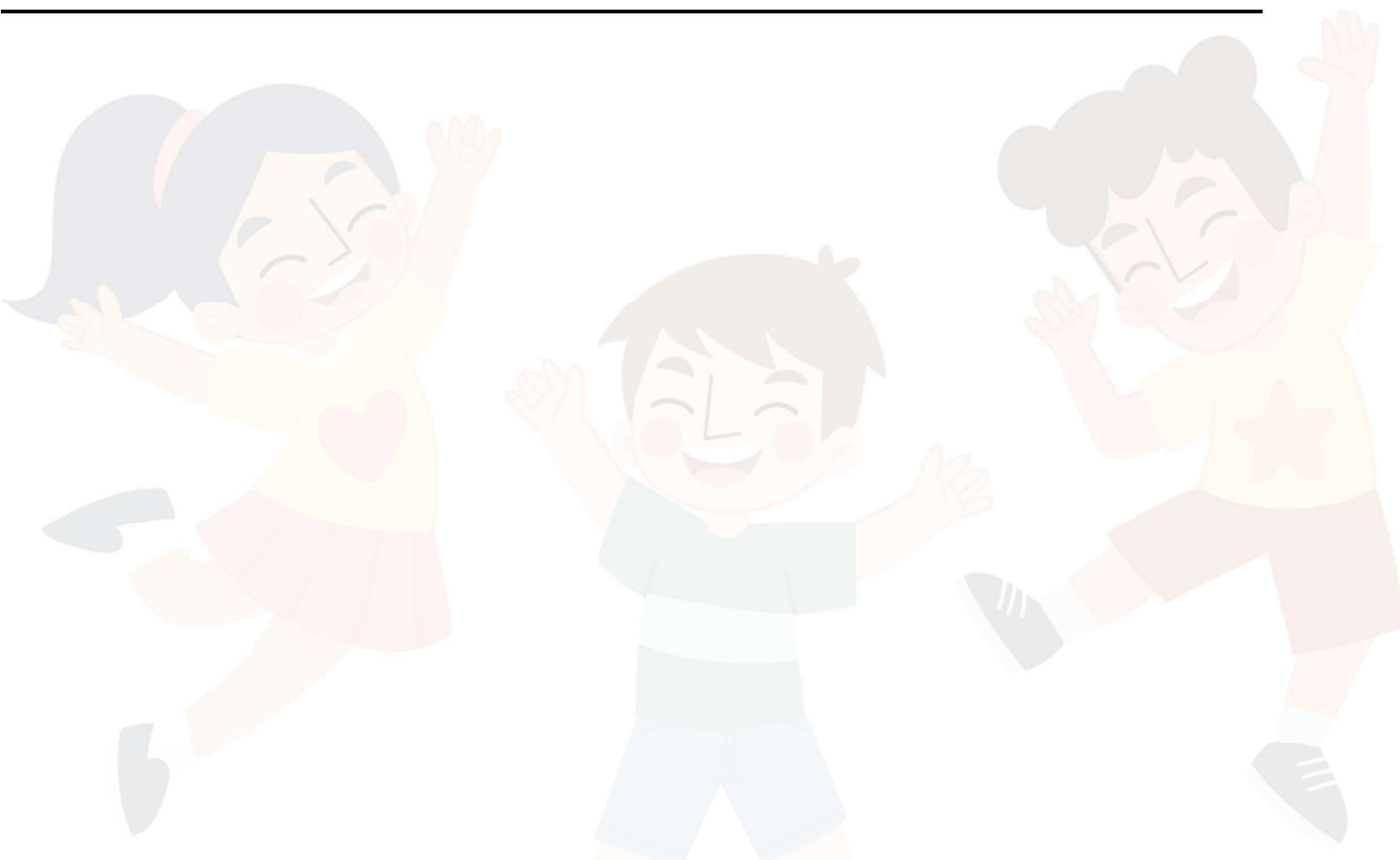


86, Whitehill
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Hitchin,
Hertfordshire
SG4 9HY

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Whitworth Rd
County Oak
Crawley
RH11 7XL

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Executive Summary

Proposal for Residential Children's Home at 186 Whitehill

Purpose: This application seeks a lawful development certificate under Class C3(b) to operate a residential children's home at 186 Whitehill. The home will accommodate three children with learning disabilities or mental health conditions, along with three carers living in a single household.

Location: The property is in a quiet residential area, featuring onsite parking for two vehicles and convenient access to public transport, which will help minimise disruption to the neighbourhood.

Operation

Carers: The home will have one live-in carer and two additional carers who will work in shifts to provide 24/7 care for the children.

Environment: The setting will be family-oriented, promoting a cohesive atmosphere with shared meals and activities.

Visitors: We expect minimal professional visits (approximately three to four per month), which can be accommodated with the available onsite parking.

Mitigation of Concerns

Noise: We will implement structured routines, utilise soundproofing, and organise supervised outdoor activities to minimise any disturbances.

Safety: Enhanced security measures will include fencing, monitoring systems, and careful assessments of residents to ensure a safe environment.

Community Relations: We plan to maintain open communication with the community, hold engagement sessions, and appoint a community liaison officer.

Regulatory Compliance: We will ensure compliance with OFSTED registration standards to uphold high levels of care.

Conclusion: This proposal aligns with Class C3(b) and aims to maintain neighbourhood harmony while addressing community concerns. It is designed to provide essential care services for children who need them.

Introduction

This statement supports an application for a **Lawful Development Certificate** under **Class C3(b)** of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). It relates to the intended use of **186 Whitehill Rd** as a **residential children's home** accommodating up to **three children** with emotional, behavioural, or mild learning difficulties, living alongside **three resident carers** in a single household setting.

The proposed use meets the criteria of Class C3(b), which allows for up to six residents living together with care provided. This includes both the children and live-in carers forming one domestic unit. The home is not an institutional or clinical facility but a therapeutic, family-style residence registered with Ofsted and operated in accordance with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.



Proposed Use

The home will operate as a small-scale, residential care provision under the guidance of the South Bank Children's Home model. Key aspects of the operation include:

Staffing and Household Structure

The home will be staffed at all times, with the number of carers on duty varying in accordance with the assessed needs of the individual children. The staff team will consist of experienced residential care professionals who are trained in child protection, behaviour management, therapeutic support, and education engagement. A Registered Manager and a Responsible Individual will oversee the day-to-day and strategic management of the service, respectively.

Family Environment

Daily routines will include shared mealtimes, collaborative household activities, and a culture of emotional containment, responsibility, and mutual respect. The home provides a structured and nurturing setting designed to foster children's development and resilience, consistent with the guidance in the Quality Care Standards.

Education and Life Skills

Each child will be supported to access local education provision, develop independent living skills, and receive personal and emotional support tailored to their care plan. The home is not registered as a school, but staff liaise with local authorities, virtual schools, and education professionals to ensure continuity and progression in each child's education and development.

Professional Visitors

Visits by professionals such as **social workers, therapists, or education officers** are expected to occur approximately three to four times per month. These are managed respectfully and discreetly within the household and can be accommodated on-site, utilising existing parking without affecting on-street provision.



Site and Surrounding Area



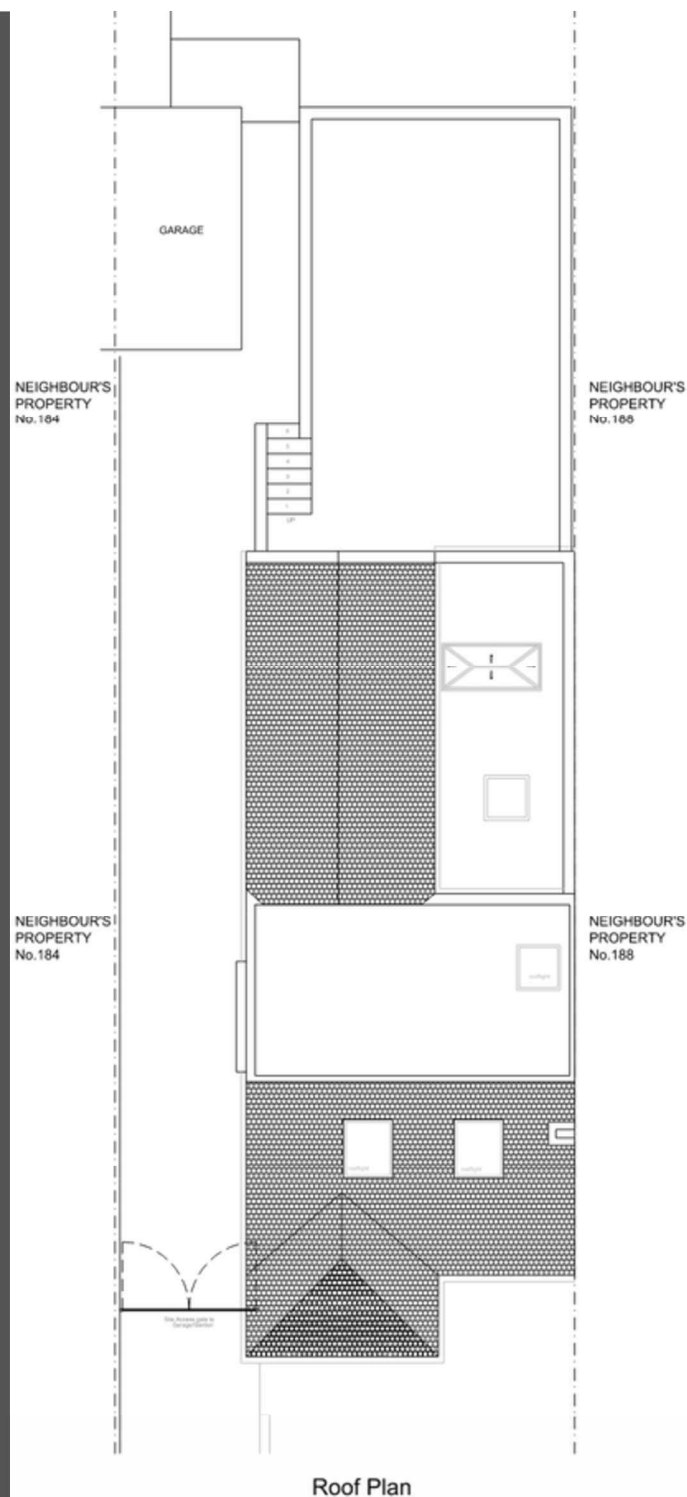
186 Whitehill Rd is ideally located in a tranquil residential neighbourhood, surrounded by inviting family homes and friendly elderly residents. This property offers convenient **on-site parking for two vehicles**, ensuring that staff and visitors can access the premises easily without impacting local parking. Moreover, its accessibility via public transport routes enhances convenience, making it an excellent choice for visitors and staff alike.



Design Considerations

Site Plan and Use of Space

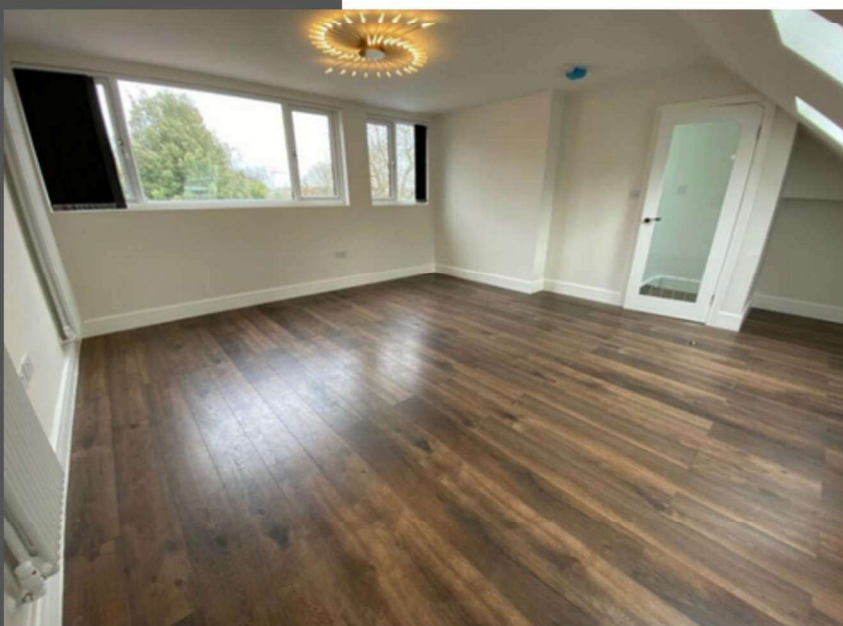
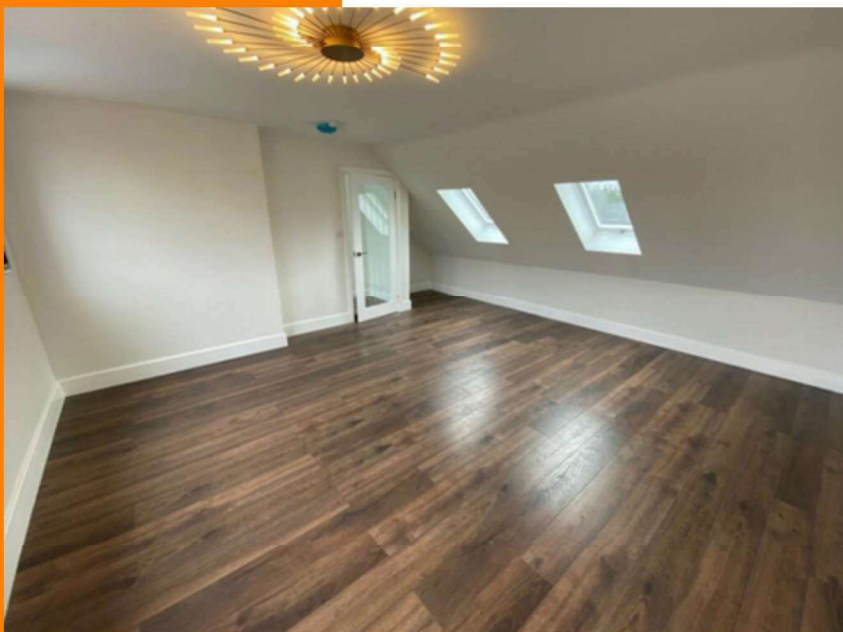
The External layout of 186 Whitehill has been carefully designed to create a family-oriented environment.



Internal Layout and Use of Space

The internal layout of 186 Whitehill has been carefully designed to create a family-oriented environment. Shared living spaces, such as the lounge and dining area, encourage social interaction and a sense of community within the household.

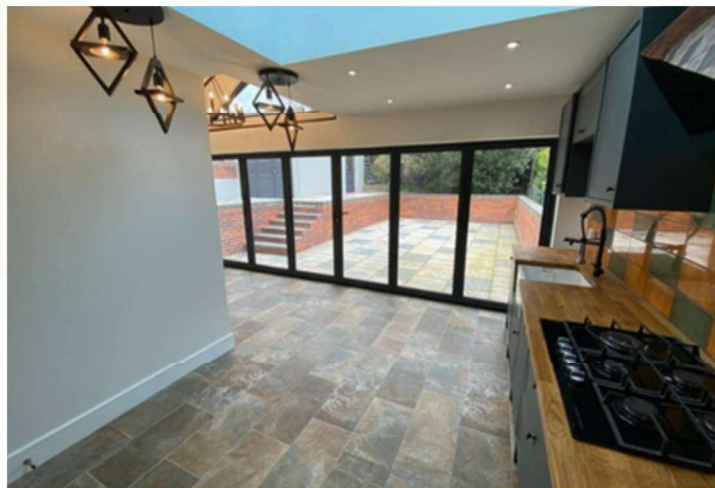
Living Room



Internal Layout and Use of Space

Facilities will be tailored to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities or mental health conditions. For example, sensory-friendly spaces and calming decor have been incorporated to foster a supportive and nurturing environment.

Kitchen



Patio

Private bedrooms ensure comfort and personal space for each child.

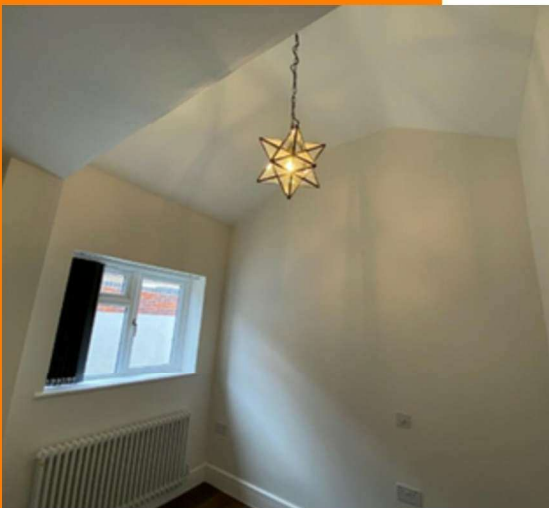
Bedroom 1



Bedroom 2



Bedroom 3



The home will operate as a small-scale, residential care provision under the guidance of the South Bank Children's Home model. Key aspects of the operation include:

Safety and Security

- Enhanced security measures, including perimeter fencing and secure entry points, ensure a safe living environment for the residents and the surrounding community. These measures comply with Secured by Design standards.
- The property's layout also incorporates fire safety features, such as fire doors and strategically placed smoke alarms, in alignment with relevant building control regulations.



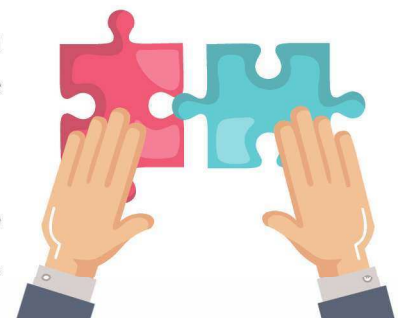
Environmental Considerations

- The design includes landscaping improvements, such as the addition of greenery and a designated outdoor recreational area, which provides a safe and supervised space for residents to engage in outdoor activities.
- Energy-efficient appliances and lighting have been included to minimise the property's environmental impact while supporting a sustainable operation.



Integration with Neighbourhood Character

- The external appearance of the property will remain unchanged, ensuring it blends seamlessly with the surrounding residential homes.
- Soundproofing measures have been incorporated to maintain the quiet atmosphere of the neighbourhood, further minimising potential disturbances.



Adaptable Design

- The property layout has been designed with adaptability in mind, ensuring it can be adjusted to accommodate future residents with diverse needs without significant alterations.
- Communal spaces can be multifunctional, catering to different activities such as group therapy sessions, meal preparation, and recreation.



Environmental Benefits

The setting of 186 Whitehill offers additional advantages:

Green Spaces: The garden, nearby parks and open areas provide opportunities for supervised outdoor activities, contributing to the well-being of the children while maintaining safe and orderly engagement with the community.

Residential Safety: The neighbourhood's low crime rate and stable environment enhance the suitability of the location for a vulnerable population requiring care and support.



Operation and Compliance

The proposed use of 186 Whitehill is fully compliant with Class C3(b) criteria. It supports three children in need of care, living within a stable household setting with staff who share the premises and household functions. The domestic nature of the home, the low frequency of external visitors, and the commitment to quiet, routine-based living all support the classification as a residential dwelling with care.

This proposal not only complies with planning definitions but also contributes a vital and well-managed local resource to support children who cannot remain in their birth families. The use is modest, the impact is minimal, and the benefit to the local authority's care strategy is considerable.



Planning Assessment

Key Issues Addressed

Compliance with Class C3(b)

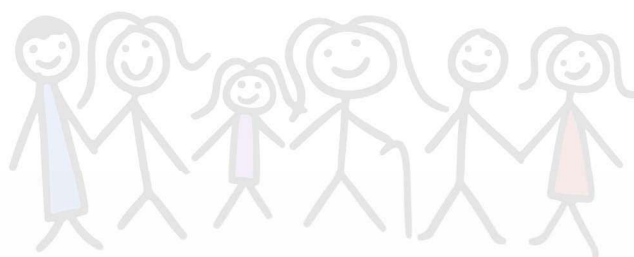
- The home will accommodate three children and three carers, meeting regulations and living together in a shared and structured environment.
- The shared facilities, communal dining, and cohesive routines emulate a traditional household, meeting Class C3(b) requirements.

Parking and Visitor Provision

- The property's two onsite parking spaces are adequate for daily operations and visitor needs.
- Professional visitor traffic will remain minimal, further reducing the impact on local infrastructure.

Community Impact

- Proactive integration measures and engagement with neighbours will ensure harmony within the residential setting.
- Structured routines and effective supervision will maintain a quiet and orderly environment, preserving the neighbourhood's character.



Incorporated Solutions and Mitigations

Staffing and Operational Plan

- A clear staffing rota will outline carers' shift patterns, contingency plans for holidays, and coverage for absences, ensuring uninterrupted care.
- A designated lead carer will oversee daily operations and maintain consistency in household management.

Community Risk Assessment and Safety Measures

- Conduct a risk assessment to evaluate potential impacts and implement proactive safety protocols, such as perimeter fencing to secure the property and mitigate risks of unsupervised exits.
- Engage a Crime Prevention Design Advisor to incorporate recommendations aligning with Secured by Design (SBD) standards.

Engagement and Communication Strategy

- Host informational sessions and distribute materials to residents, clarifying the purpose and operation of the home.
- Appoint a **community liaison officer** to handle neighbour concerns and foster positive relations.

OFSTED Registration

- Pursue registration with OFSTED prior to opening to ensure compliance with national care standards and address concerns over unregulated care.
- Share evidence of registration steps in application materials to demonstrate transparency and accountability.

Visitor Management and Accessibility

- Limit visitor frequency to essential professionals (e.g., social workers, therapists), averaging three to four visits per month.
- Ensure all visitor parking needs are met through onsite provisions, avoiding any reliance on street parking.

Neighbourhood Safety

- Establish comprehensive monitoring protocols to ensure safety for both residents of the home and the surrounding community.
- Engage in collaboration with local law enforcement and community service organisations to synchronise efforts aimed at safeguarding all stakeholders involved.



Addressing Concerns About Increased Noise or Disruptions

Residents may worry about disruptions associated with the children's home, especially when caring for individuals with learning disabilities or mental health conditions. To reassure them:

- **Structured Routine and Supervision:** The children's daily routines will be carefully managed with constant supervision by experienced carers, ensuring stability and minimising any disruptive behaviour.
- **Small Number of Residents:** With only three children living in the home alongside carers, this setup mirrors a traditional family household. The scale of the operation is deliberately low impact to maintain the quiet residential character.
- **Community Engagement:** Open lines of communication will be established to address any concerns from neighbours swiftly, fostering transparency and trust.
- **Environmental Measures:** Measures such as soundproofing the property and scheduling outdoor activities during non-sensitive hours will be implemented to mitigate any potential noise.



Responding to Arguments About Property Values or Neighbourhood Character

Concerns regarding property values or perceived changes in neighbourhood character often stem from misconceptions. To address this:

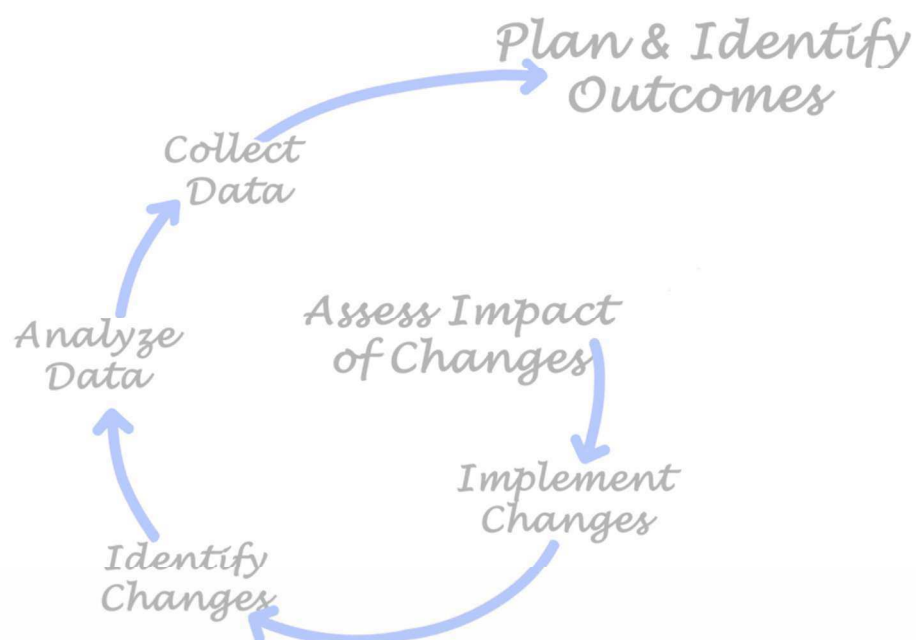
- **Positive Community Contribution:** The home is designed to integrate seamlessly into the neighbourhood, maintaining its residential nature. Children's homes like this provide vital services while contributing positively to community diversity and inclusion.
- **Expert Management:** The home will be professionally run and adhere to OFSTED standards, ensuring that operations are conducted responsibly and with accountability.
- **No Alteration to Local Landscape:** The external appearance of the property will remain unchanged, avoiding any visual impact that might raise concerns about the neighbourhood's aesthetic or character.
- **Studies Disproving Value Impact:** Research often shows that well-managed care homes do not adversely affect property values; these findings will be shared with residents to dispel fears.



Considering Apprehensions About Safety

Safety concerns regarding children in care with specific needs can be sensitive. Addressing these worries compassionately:

- **Strict Supervision Protocols:** Carers will follow rigorous supervision and monitoring procedures, ensuring children's behaviour aligns with the neighbourhood's expectations and safety standards.
- **Risk Mitigation Measures:** Enhanced security measures, such as perimeter fencing, monitoring systems, and secure doors, will protect both the residents and the community.
- **Community Liaison Role:** A dedicated liaison officer will act as the bridge between the home and neighbours, addressing any safety-related concerns promptly.
- **Careful Resident Selection:** Vulnerable children placed in the home are assessed carefully to ensure their placement aligns with a family-oriented, non-disruptive environment.
- **Focus on Rehabilitation:** Rather than posing risks, the goal is to help children integrate positively into society, improving their chances for success and reducing the likelihood of any disruptive incidents.



Conclusion

The proposed use of 186 Whitehill is fully compliant with Class C3(b) criteria. It supports three children in need of care, living within a stable household setting with staff who share the premises and household functions. The domestic nature of the home, the low frequency of external visitors, and the commitment to quiet, routine-based living all support the classification as a residential dwelling with care.

This proposal not only complies with planning definitions but also contributes a vital and well-managed local resource to support children who cannot remain in their birth families. The use is modest, the impact is minimal, and the benefit to the local authority's care strategy is considerable.

Appendices

Case Study 1:

Residential Children's Home - Harmony Integration

Location: A quiet residential neighbourhood in Bristol, UK

Objective: Establish a small-scale residential children's home for children with learning disabilities.

Outcome: Through structured routines, soundproofing, and strict operational procedures, the home operated seamlessly in the community. Proactive efforts, such as appointing a community liaison officer and hosting informational sessions, built trust among neighbours. A survey conducted six months post-establishment revealed a positive perception of the home, citing its contribution to inclusivity and community enrichment.

Case Study 2:

Property Values and Community Impact Study - Well-Managed Homes

Research: A study by the Local Planning Authority in West Midlands, UK (2019)

Objective: Examine whether care homes affect property values in residential areas.

Findings: The study concluded that care homes, when managed professionally and adhering to high standards, do not negatively impact property values. In some cases, properties closer to well-managed facilities even appreciated slightly, attributed to improved local services and safety measures.

Case Study 3:

OFSTED Registered Children's Home - Promoting Accountability

Location: Oxford, UK

Details: A children's home accommodating five residents with professional OFSTED registration.

Outcome: The home maintained an “Outstanding” rating due to its adherence to strict care standards. Feedback from local stakeholders showed reassurance from OFSTED oversight, mitigating initial concerns about operations and safety.

