

PLANNING STATEMENT

Serenity House

32 Mendip Way, Great Ashby, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 6GE

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application for planning permission for the change of use of 32 Mendip Way, Great Ashby, Stevenage to a small, supported living service falling within Use Class C2 (Residential Institution).

The application follows pre-application discussions with North Hertfordshire District Council under reference **26/01677/PRE**, with written advice issued on 10 August 2026.

The Local Planning Authority advised that the proposed use would fall within Use Class C2 and that the proposal was not considered objectionable in principle, subject to consideration of the matters identified within the pre-application response.

The proposal has therefore been developed having regard to that advice.

2. Existing Property

The application property is an existing three-storey residential dwelling situated within an established residential area of Great Ashby.

The property has previously operated as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and comprises five bedrooms, four of which have en-suite facilities, together with shared kitchen and living accommodation.

No extensions or significant external alterations to the building are proposed.

The external appearance and residential character of the property will therefore remain unchanged.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal is for the change of use of the property to provide a small, supported living service known as Serenity House, accommodating a maximum of three adult women.

The internal accommodation will comprise:

- three en-suite bedrooms for residents;
- one existing bedroom to be utilised as a staff office;
- one ground-floor bedroom to be utilised as a communal lounge;
- shared kitchen and dining facilities; and
- existing external amenity areas.

The proposed development principally involves a change in the use and management of the property rather than physical alteration of the building.

4. Nature of the Proposed Use

Serenity House will provide accommodation and 24-hour care and support for a maximum of three adult women with mental health needs and/or complex trauma who require support to live within the community.

Residents will have individual accommodation, and the service will be operated within a small, domestic environment intended to promote independence, choice, dignity and community participation.

Personal care will be provided where this forms part of an individual's assessed and commissioned care package and will be delivered in accordance with the provider's registration with the Care Quality Commission.

The service will be managed by the provider and staffed throughout the day and night. Staff will not permanently reside at the property.

The Local Planning Authority considered the nature of these arrangements as part of the pre-application process and advised that the proposed use would fall within Use Class C2 (Residential Institution).

5. Staffing and Management

The service will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The organisation intends to employ approximately nine full-time members of staff to support the operation of the service. This represents the overall staffing establishment and does not mean that nine members of staff will be present at the property simultaneously.

Staff will work according to a planned rota, with staffing levels determined by the assessed needs of the residents.

Staff changeovers will be managed to minimise unnecessary vehicle movements and disturbance to neighbouring properties.

Further information regarding staffing, shift arrangements, referral and selection criteria, management arrangements, parking and the day-to-day operation of the service is provided within the accompanying Operational Management Plan.

6. Character and Appearance

No significant external alterations are proposed.

The property will continue to have the appearance of a residential dwelling, and the proposed use will remain residential in character.

The small scale of the service, accommodating a maximum of three residents, will help ensure that the property continues to sit appropriately within the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

The proposal is therefore not anticipated to result in an unacceptable impact upon the character or appearance of the property or surrounding area.

7. Residential and Neighbour Amenity

Serenity House will operate within a domestic environment.

The maximum occupancy will be limited to three residents, and no activities are proposed that would ordinarily be expected to generate significant levels of noise, lighting or disturbance.

Staff will be expected to respect the residential nature of the surrounding area and operational arrangements will be managed accordingly.

No external physical alterations are proposed that would adversely affect neighbouring properties.

The proposal is therefore not anticipated to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential amenity.

8. Access, Transport and Parking

The property is located within an established residential area with access to local services and public transport.

Bus stops and local amenities are available within walking distance of the property, providing opportunities for residents, staff and visitors to access the site without reliance solely upon private vehicles.

Staff will operate on a shift/rota basis rather than all employees attending the property simultaneously.

Vehicle movements will therefore be dispersed and primarily associated with staff arriving and leaving at shift-change periods.

Existing parking arrangements will be utilised, and additional on-street parking is available within the surrounding area where required.

The detailed arrangements for staff rotation, handovers and parking are addressed within the accompanying Operational Management Plan.

9. Sustainability and Local Amenities

The site is situated within the established settlement of Great Ashby and is accessible to local shops, services, community facilities and public transport.

The location will enable residents to access ordinary community facilities and participate in the local community while receiving the support required to maintain their independence.

The proposal therefore makes effective use of an existing property within an established and sustainable residential location.

10. Biodiversity Net Gain

No extensions or significant external works are proposed, and the development relates primarily to the change of use and internal arrangement of an existing building.

The Local Planning Authority's pre-application advice indicated that the development would fall within the de minimis exemption in relation to the requirement to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

11. Pre-Application Advice

Pre-application advice was obtained from North Hertfordshire District Council under reference 26/01677/PRE, dated 10 August 2026.

The Council concluded that the proposal was not considered objectionable in principle.

The pre-application response identified the need for the formal application to be supported by operational information addressing:

- the selection criteria for residents;
- the type of care and support provided;
- staffing and staff rotation arrangements;
- noise mitigation where necessary; and
- parking arrangements.

An Operational Management Plan and supporting governance procedures has been prepared and submitted alongside this Planning Statement, providing further details on the management, staffing, resident selection, risk management, parking and day to day operation of the service.

The applicant has sought to ensure that the formal application responds directly to the matters raised through the pre-application process.

12. Conclusion

The proposed development will provide a small-scale supported living service for a maximum of three adult women within an existing residential property.

The proposal requires no significant external alterations and will retain the residential appearance and character of the building.

The site is situated within an established and sustainable residential location with access to public transport, local amenities and community facilities.

The scale and nature of the proposed operation, together with the management arrangements set out within the accompanying Operational Management Plan, are intended to ensure that the service operates without unacceptable impact upon neighbouring residential amenity, highway safety or the character of the surrounding area.

The proposal has been developed having regard to the Local Planning Authority's pre-application advice, which confirmed that the proposed use falls within Use Class C2 and was not considered objectionable in principle.

Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests that planning permission be granted for the proposed change of use.