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Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning

North Hertfordshire Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

District ref: 24/02173/FP
HCC ref: NH/22605/2024
HCC received: 14 October 2024
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Senober Khan

Location

Anderson House, Florence Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 1RA

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

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

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

Before the commencement of development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, details of the internal dimensions of the cycle storage compliant with the Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide, chapter 12/Cycle Design Guidance (2020, DfT), the internal dimensions shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with the agreed details and completed prior to occupation of the development hereby approved and shall thereafter be retained, maintained, and kept available for the occupants of the development at all times.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018)

ADVISORY NOTE

HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following Advisory Note (AN) to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980.

AN1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN2) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN3) New or amended vehicle crossover access (section 184): Where works are required within the public highway to facilitate a new or amended vehicular access, the Highway Authority require the construction of such works to be undertaken to their satisfaction and specification, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. If any of the works associated with the construction of the access affects or requires the removal and/or the relocation of any equipment, apparatus or structures (e.g. street name plates, bus stop signs or shelters, statutory authority equipment etc.) the applicant will be required to bear the cost of such removal or alteration. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission, requirements and for the work to be carried out on the applicant's behalf. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/dropped-kerbs/dropped-kerbs.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN4) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN5) Avoidance of surface water discharge onto the highway: The applicant is advised that the Highway Authority has powers under section 163 of the Highways Act 1980, to take appropriate steps where deemed necessary (serving notice to the occupier of premises adjoining a highway) to prevent water from the roof or other part of the premises falling upon persons using the highway, or to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, surface water from the premises flowing on to, or over the footway of the highway.

Brief description in support of proposed development by the applicant:

This Planning Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a planning application at Andersons House, Florence Street, Hitchin 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"

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

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.

Andersons House was a sheltered housing scheme providing small self-contained units and support facilities for elderly people, the property provided 46 flats.

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.

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.

The proposed development comprises the conversion of the existing building from sheltered housing to hostel use.

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

A slight rearrangement within the car park is proposed in order to accommodate refuse and recycling within a dedicated area and cycle parking.

Two points of pedestrian access are proposed (as existing): one from Florence Street and the other from the car park.

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. 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 will be collected by a private contractor, service vehicles will reverse into the site and exit in a forwards gear.

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

In total, therefore, the property will accommodate 86 people either on a single or shared basis.

Residents will stay for varying lengths of time depending on their needs; from 3 months to potentially a year or more.

The proposed development is a change of use and few external changes are proposed to the property.

The existing car park will be retained, but rearranged slightly to accommodate refuse/recycling storage and cycle parking. In respect of hostel use, 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Highways comments:

The proposal the conversion of the existing building from sheltered housing with 46 residential units to hostel use with 48 residential units, with an additional 3 car parking spaces taking the total to 22 spaces and 16 cycle spaces within an enclosure within the car park, plus 10 short stay spaces.

The proposed car parking provision and layout is the responsibility of the LPA to determine the level and suitability of the car parking proposals, however, it is essential that it is operated in efficient and safe manner to minimise the impact on the local highway network which is the responsibility of the HCC HA.

The HA has reviewed the Planning Design and Access Statement and acknowledges that given the site location in close proximity to the Hitchin town centre, access to amenities, good accessibility and connectivity to public transport and controlled parking in place on highways surrounding the site, the proposal is not likely to have any significant impact on highway safety or operation.

Recommendation:

Subject to the following conditions the HA raises no objection:

Conditions:

Before the commencement of development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, details of the internal dimensions of the cycle storage compliant with the Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide, chapter 12/Cycle Design Guidance (2020, DfT), the internal dimensions shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with the agreed details and completed prior to occupation of the development hereby approved and shall thereafter be retained, maintained, and kept available for the occupants of the development at all times.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018)

Signed

Senober Khan

4 November 2024