

Location 1 Ravenscroft Park Barnet EN5 4ND

Reference: 23/4101/FUL Received: 22nd September 2023
Accepted: 3rd October 2023

Ward: High Barnet Expiry 28th November 2023

Case Officer: Emily Bell

Applicant: Patel

Proposal: Conversion of 2no. self contained flats into a care home (C2 use)

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

AND the Committee grants delegated authority to the Service Director – Planning and Building Control to make any minor alterations, additions or deletions to the recommended conditions/obligations or reasons for refusal as set out in this report and addendum provided this authority shall be exercised after consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice-Chair) of the Committee (who may request that such alterations, additions or deletions be first approved by the Committee)

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - 4022/1A
 - 4022/2A
 - 4022/3A
 - 4022/4A
 - 4022/5A
 - 4022/6A
 - 4022/7A
 - 4022/8A
 - 4022/9A
 - 4022/10A
 - 4022/11A
 - 4022/12A
 - 4022/13A

4022/14A
Site location plan
Design and Access Statement

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning and so as to ensure that the development is carried out fully in accordance with the plans as assessed in accordance with Policies CS NPPF and CS1 of the Local Plan Core Strategy DPD (adopted September 2012) and Policy DM01 of the Local Plan Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012).

- 2 This development must be begun within three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 3 The property shall at all times be ancillary to and occupied in conjunction with the main care home at 2 to 6 Ravenscroft Park and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class C2 or C3 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order, with or without modification).

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control of the type of use within the category in order to safeguard the amenities of the area.

Informative(s):

- 1 In accordance with paragraphs 38-57 of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, focused on solutions. The LPA has produced planning policies and written guidance to assist applicants when submitting applications. These are all available on the Council's website. A pre-application advice service is also offered. The LPA has negotiated with the applicant/agent where necessary during the application process to ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with the Development Plan.

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

The application was deferred from the January meeting to allow a discussion to take place between neighbouring residents and the applicant regarding privacy and noise issues and for Committee Members to undertake a site visit.

1. Site Description

The application site is occupied by a two-storey end of terrace property located on the north side of Ravenscroft Park. The property features a part single and part two storey rear projection and existing first floor rear dormer.

The neighbouring attached property sited to the west in relation to the subject property, is in use as a care home across nos. 2-6 Ravenscroft Park.

The site is located within the Wood Street conservation area and the site is covered by Article 4 direction, however the building is not listed.

2. Site History

Reference: 21/2106/FUL

Address: 1 Ravenscroft Park, Barnet, EN5 4ND

Decision: Approved subject to conditions

Decision Date: 28 March 2022

Description: Second floor rear extension. Second floor rear dormer window. Side dormer windows.

Reference: 22/2256/CON

Address: 1 Ravenscroft Park, Barnet, EN5 4ND

Decision: Approved

Decision Date: 30 June 2022

Description: Submission of details of condition 4 (Window detail) pursuant to planning permission 21/2106/FUL dated 27/03/2022

3. Proposal

The application seeks consent for the change of use from 2no self-contained flats into a care home (C2 use).

No changes are proposed to the external elevations of the property. There is an existing nursing home at no. 2-6 Ravenscroft Park consisting of 75 bedrooms which is running at full capacity. The proposal seeks to integrate the application site with the existing nursing facility adjacent.

The conversion will create an additional 11 rooms within the care home.

4. Public Consultation

Consultation letters were sent to 18 neighbouring properties. 7 letters of objection and 1 letter of representation were received, summarised below:

- o There is no heritage statement
- o There is a case for retaining one of the original room interiors
- o Noise disturbance from use
- o Light pollution due to use at all times of day
- o Staff movements will increase
- o Increased traffic from visitors
- o Change the character of the street
- o Some bedrooms do not have source of natural light
- o Increased rubbish produced
- o Lack of privacy

Internal Consultee Responses:

Highways: No objection

Adult Social Services: Additional nursing capacity is welcomed. The existing home is good quality and reasonably priced.

Environmental Health: No objection, subject to conditions.

5.1 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

The determination of planning applications is made mindful of Central Government advice and the Local Plan for the area. It is recognised that Local Planning Authorities must determine applications in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and that the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against another.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 20th December 2023. This is a key part of the Governments reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth.

The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This applies unless any adverse impacts of a development would 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits.

The Mayor's London Plan 2021

The new London Plan which sets out the Mayor's overarching strategic planning framework for the next 20 to 25 years was adopted on the 2nd March 2021 and supersedes the previous Plan.

The London Development Plan is the overall strategic plan for London, and it sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital to 2050. It forms part of the development plan for Greater London and is recognised in the NPPF as part of the development plan.

The London Plan provides a unified framework for strategies that are designed to ensure that all Londoners benefit from sustainable improvements to their quality of life.

Barnet's Local Plan (2012)

Barnet's Local Plan is made up of a suite of documents including the Core Strategy and

Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents. Both were adopted in September 2012.

- Relevant Core Strategy Policies: CS NPPF, CS1, CS4, CS5, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS15.
- Relevant Development Management Policies: DM01, DM02, DM03, DM04, DM07, DM08, DM09, DM16, DM17.

Policy DM09 relates to the provision of specialist housing in the Borough, Policy DM07 seeks to protect existing housing in Barnet.

The Council's approach to development as set out in Policy DM01 is to minimise the impact on the local environment and to ensure that occupiers of new developments as well as neighbouring occupiers enjoy a high standard of amenity. Policy DM01 states that all development should represent high quality design and should be designed to allow for adequate daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook for adjoining occupiers. Policy DM02 states that where appropriate, development will be expected to demonstrate compliance to minimum amenity standards and make a positive contribution to the Borough. The development standards set out in Policy DM02 are regarded as key for Barnet to deliver the highest standards of urban design.

Barnet's New Local Plan (Reg 24)

Barnet's Draft Local Plan - Reg 24: The Reg 22 version of the draft new Local Plan was approved by the Council on 19th October 2021 for submission to the Secretary of State. Following submission, the Local Plan underwent an Examination in Public (Reg 24). The Reg 22 document sets out the Council's draft planning policy framework together with draft development proposals for 65 sites.

As part of this stage (Reg 24), the Inspector in his Interim Findings and Next Steps letter of August 17th has set out how the Council can through making Main Modifications to the Local Plan address issues of legal compliance and deficiencies in soundness. These interim findings are a clear indication of what the Local Plan and the policies and site proposals within will look like at adoption, subject to making the Inspector's suggested Main Modifications. Whilst the Council moves forward to formal consultation on the Main Modifications (expected to commence in January 2024) the Interim Findings and Next Steps letter of August 17th shall be considered, in the interim, a relevant material consideration in the Council's decision making on planning applications.

The Local Plan 2012 remains the statutory development plan for Barnet until such stage as the replacement plan is adopted and as such applications should continue to be determined in accordance with the 2012 Local Plan, while noting that account needs to be taken of the policies and site proposals in the draft Local Plan and the stage that it has reached.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Residential Design Guidance (2016)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted October 2016)

- Provides detailed guidance that supplements policies in the adopted Local Plan, and sets out how sustainable development will be delivered in Barnet.

5.2 Main issues for consideration

The main issues for consideration in this case are:

- Principle of development, including loss of existing flats, harm to the character of the area and residential amenity
- Impact on highways

5.3 Assessment of proposals

Principle of development

The Use Classes Order sets out a distinction between residential institutions (Class C2) and dwellinghouses (Class C3). There is case law on the definitions of both, and indeed cases have been found where an intermediate between the two could be described as a sui-generis use. Generally speaking, care homes with shared facilities are considered to fall within Use Class C2.

Policy H13 of the London plan (2021) states that Boroughs should work positively and collaboratively with providers to identify sites which may be suitable for specialist older persons housing. The form this takes will vary, and it should be designed to satisfy the requirements of the specific use or group it is intended for, whilst providing options within the accommodation offer for the diversity of London's population.

Policy DM09 which addresses specialist housing needs within the Borough states the following:

c: Housing choice for older people Housing proposals for older people should:

- i. help to meet an identified need;
- ii. demonstrate that they will not have a harmful impact on the character and amenities of the surrounding area; and
- iii. be within walking distance of local shops and easily accessible by public transport; and
- iv. provide adequate communal facilities including accommodation for essential staff on site.

In terms of addressing need, it is noted that the site would be integrated into an existing Care Home. Indeed, the application itself to some degree suggests a need for further specialist accommodation on-site. Nevertheless, the Council's Adult Social Services team have reviewed the information provided and confirmed that additional nursing capacity would be welcome, particularly nursing dementia which Abbey Ravenscroft provide. The existing nursing home is also a Good home from a quality perspective, and reasonably priced.

Regarding point ii) of the above policy, character and amenity considerations will be addressed within the relevant sections below.

Regarding point iii) of the above policy, the site is in very close proximity to the High Street primary retail frontage and is in close proximity to High Barnet Underground Station and a number of bus routes. However, as noted above and given the specific needs and requirements of the residents of the nursing home, most residents would only very rarely visit the shops or similar facilities and would be likely to do so only under specialist supervision, or with a relative. Based on the site's level of accessibility, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in view of point iii) of Policy DM09.

Regarding point iv) of the above policy, the proposed development would not reduce the amount or quality of the external on-site amenity. No staff live on-site, with staff on shift patterns. Therefore, based on the above, it is considered that the proposed development would provide enhanced on-site communal facilities to augment the existing and is acceptable in view of staff accommodation given there is no full-time requirement. As a result, the proposed development is considered acceptable in view of point iv) of Policy DM09.

In summary, it is considered that the proposed extension to the existing Care Home is acceptable in-principle subject to design, amenity and highways considerations to be discussed below.

It is noted that the conversion would result in the loss of a four bedroom flat, however, in this case the applicant has confirmed that this flat does not have access to any private amenity space on site as it is located across the upper floors. As such, it is not considered to provide good quality family accommodation, and due to the existing care home immediately adjacent, it is considered that this site is the most suitable location for additional care facilities, and the loss of a four bed unit is therefore justified.

Whether harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the existing building, the street scene and the wider locality:

Any scheme for the site will need to respect the character and appearance of the local area, relate appropriately to the sites context and comply with development plan policies in these respects. This will include suitably addressing the requirements of development plan policies such as DM01, CS05 (both of the Barnet Local Plan), D1, D3 and D6 (of the London Plan).

The site is located within the Wood Street Conservation Area and is adjacent to two locally listed buildings, Grimsdyke and The Sun House, however, the site itself is not listed. There are no external changes proposed as part of the development and as such, the proposal is not considered to result in harm to the character and appearance of the existing building or the wider street scene. The proposed use, given the adjoining existing Care Home is considered to be appropriate in this location.

Impact on the amenities of neighbours

Paragraph 2.7.1 of Policy DM01 states that:

Schemes which significantly harm the amenity of neighbouring occupiers will be refused planning permission. Protecting amenity helps to protect the well-being of the boroughs residents. It is important to ensure that developments do not significantly overshadow neighbouring buildings, block daylight, reduce sunlight, or result in a loss of privacy or outlook.

The proposed care home would not rely on extensions to the building and there are no external alterations proposed. In terms of visual impact, outlook, daylight / sunlight loss and loss of privacy, the proposed use is unlikely to be detrimental to the adjacent neighbouring occupiers in this respect.

With regards to loss of privacy, no external changes are proposed to the fenestration and as such there will be no change in levels of overlooking to neighbouring properties. Given that the existing use of the site is residential, there is not considered to be any greater levels of overlooking arising from the proposed use.

Noise and Disturbance:

No significant cumulative operational noise impacts are identified for neighbours as a consequence of the proposed development. The proposed development will be consistent with the historical use and the character of this stretch of the surroundings, in particular no. 2-6 Ravenscroft Park.

The number of bedrooms would likely result in an increased number of movements to and from the site on a daily basis, however, it is not considered that this increase would be so significantly above the current as to result in a significantly greater impact than already existing.

Parking and highways

Highways officers have reviewed the application and have raised no objections to the proposal.

5.4 Response to Public Consultation

- o There is no heritage statement
- o There is a case for retaining one of the original room interiors

There is not a requirement in this case for a heritage statement. Given that the site is not listed, there is no requirement for permission to retain interior features/layout.

- o Noise disturbance from use

This has been discussed within the main body of the report.

- o Light pollution due to use at all times of day

As there are no changes proposed to the windows, and the previous use was residential, there is not considered to be any significant additional impacts with regards to light pollution arising from the use.

- o Staff movements will increase

The applicant has confirmed that on average, due to the increase in bedrooms, two additional day staff and one additional night staff will be required. No staff live on-site, with staff on shift patterns in place. Although acknowledging that additional staff will be required, given the small number of additional staff required, it is not expected that this will result in detrimental harm to surrounding neighbours.

- o Increased traffic from visitors

It is acknowledged that there may be additional visitors, however, given the number of additional rooms provided this is not considered to result in detrimental harm.

- o Change the character of the street

Given that there is an existing care home immediately adjacent to the application site which makes up the entire stretch of this part of Ravenscroft Park and that there are no

external changes proposed to allow for the conversion, there is not considered to be any detrimental impact on the character of the street resulting from the proposed development.

- o Some bedrooms do not have source of natural light

All proposed new rooms would have a window to allow for a source of natural light.

- o Increased rubbish produced

It is considered that the additional rubbish can be accommodated through existing care home arrangements.

- o Lack of privacy

This has been addressed within the main body of the report.

6. Equality and Diversity Issues

The proposal does not conflict with either Barnet Council's Equalities Policy or the commitments set in the Equality Scheme and supports the Council in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities.

7. Conclusion

The proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of the Development Plan and is therefore recommended for APPROVAL.

