

TWC/2015/0777

Grove House Hotel, 17 Whitchurch Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 3DS
Change of use from a hotel (use class C1) to a children's day care nursery (use class D1) with associated internal works and landscaping (Full Planning Application)

APPLICANT

Chace Care Ltd, Anthony Reeley

RECEIVED

25/08/2015

PARISH

Wellington

WARD

Park

OFFICER Ian Lowe

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: Yes

CLLR BARRY TILLOTSON HAS REQUESTED THAT THIS APPLICATION BE DETERMINED AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. THE PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This full planning application seeks permission for the change of use of No.17 Whitchurch Road (Grade II Listed Building) from a hotel (Use Class C1) to a children's day nursery (Use Class D1) with associated internal works, parking and landscaping.
- 1.2 Although there is no specific definition of a day care nursery it can be broadly described as a place where a number of children under five years of age are brought together for part or all of a working day regularly and where provision is made for their care, recreation and in some cases meals.
- 1.3 No external alterations are proposed to the main building, however it is proposed to erect a 2.3m high wall to separate the parking from the landscaped play area. This would be attached to the rear right hand corner of the building and extend up to the right hand boundary. The front parking area would be re-configured to provide 19 spaces including two for disabled users. It is also proposed to provide an area for bike storage. The existing vehicular entrance would be retained and following the submission of amended plans, a new pedestrian access created.
- 1.4 Internal works include the removal of previously constructed partition walls. These walls are not original to the building and are not loadbearing. The existing rooms arranged over the three floors will be used mainly for childcare of different age groups, 0-2, 2-3 and 3-5 years, with remaining rooms proposed for office, toilet and kitchen space. A basement room would be retained for storage.
- 1.5 The application is accompanied by a design and access statement, heritage statement and a travel plan. A separate application for Listed Building Consent has also been submitted (TWC/2015/0778).

BACKGROUND

- 1.6 The applicant 'The Honeybuns Nursery Group' currently operate out of a leased building at The Princess Royal Hospital approximately 0.5miles northeast of the application site. As the lease is set to expire on this property it has become necessary to re-locate to a new property. The application property has become available since the previous hotel operators vacated the building in February 2015; the applicants consider that this is a suitable local building to operate their business from. The business was established in 1995 and currently runs 3 nurseries including Telford, Norton Canes and Stafford. The nursery group are registered members of the National Day Nursery Association (NDNA).

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site was most recently known as the Grove House Hotel and is located to the north of Wellington Town Centre and immediately off Whitchurch Road. The now vacant site is surrounded by mainly residential properties but the town centre of Wellington is located within a short walking distance from the site, with access to shops and facilities as well as good transport links to other areas within Telford and Wrekin.
- 2.2 The application site consists of a large 3 storey detached property which is Grade II Listed. The property, originally known as Prospect House is described as an Early C19 red brick house with a low pitched hipped roof with plain roof tiles and oversailing eaves. The property frontage is set at a right angle to the road and consists of a central entrance porch with Victorian square bay windows to either side. At first and second floors there are sash windows with vertical glazing bay, enclosed with painted brick lintels and cills. The property has a separate side entrance with covered porch facing the main road. There are two additions to the rear of the building including a conservatory and a two storey side and rear extension which provided additional bedrooms to the hotel. The property is sited towards the left hand side of the plot with block paved parking area and turning circle to the front and a grassed area towards the rear. A mature protected beech tree is located towards the rear left hand corner of the site.
- 2.3 The front boundary of the property is enclosed by a 1m high stone wall, whilst the side and rear boundary is enclosed by high level hedging. There are examples of high level brick walls extending off the front left hand corner of the property.
- 2.4 To the right hand side of the application site is a pedestrian right of way that leads from St. Chads Close. This and Harvington Close are both residential roads located to the rear of the site.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 TWC/2015/0778 – Listed Building Consent for the change of use from a hotel to a day nursery – Under Separate Consideration

- 3.2 04/10/1989 - W89/0975 - Change Of Use Of Guest House To Guest House And Licensed Restaurant - Full Granted
- 3.3 03/09/1987 - W87/0522 - Change Of Use To Residential Home for The Mentally Ill - Full Granted
- 3.4 27/04/1992 - W92/0052 - Erection Of A Two Storey Extension To Provide Four Additional Bedrooms And Staff Accommodation - Listed Building Granted
- 3.5 20/07/1992 - W92/0020 - Erection Of A Two Storey Extension To Provide Four Additional Bedrooms To Let, Owners Accommodation And Extension To Car Park - Full Granted

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 National Planning Guidance:
National Planning Policy Framework
- 4.2 Wrekin Local Plan:
UD2 Design Criteria
HE16 Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings#
LR1 Provision of Community Facilities
- 4.3 Core Strategy:
CS2 Jobs
CS5 District & Local Centres in Telford
CS9 Accessibility and Social Inclusion
CS10 Community Facilities
CS14 Cultural, Historic & Built Environment
CS15 Urban Design

5. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Standard Consultee Responses

- 5.1 Wellington Town Council: No Objection
- 5.2 Cllr Barry Tillotson: Objection on grounds of parking issues on St. Chads Close and Harvington Close to rear, traffic congestion on Whitchurch Road, poor drop off/collection areas, no turning circle and noise pollution.
- 5.3 Highways: No objections subject to conditions for a suitable parking layout. A request is also made for a section 106 contribution of £3000 towards the implementation of double yellows across the site frontage in order to stop motorists parking in the vicinity of the site entrance, improving visibility and to stop motorists parking on Whitchurch Road.
- 5.4 Built Heritage Conservation: Support Subject To Conditions: Note that building would be returned internally to almost its original state following removal of stud partitions, and that the proposed external landscaping would

not adversely affect the setting of the listed building. Recommends conditions for sample materials and detailing of hard surfacing and landscaping.

- 5.5 Arboriculture: No objection. Note that tree works application would be required if it was necessary to prune protected Beech Tree at rear of site.
- 5.6 Shropshire Fire Service: Standard Informative

Neighbours and local groups

- 5.7 Neighbouring occupiers have been consulted and site notices erected and a total of 4 comments have been received. Of these, 3 object to the proposed change of use on grounds of:
- Highways and Parking
 - Parking on adjacent residential road.
 - Safety of Children
 - Noise
- 5.8 One local resident raises no objections to the change of use but suggests that parking on Whitchurch Road should be avoided and that the Leylandii hedge to the rear of the site should be reduced and maintained at a suitable height of 8-9ft.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:
- The principle of the change of use
 - The impact upon the Grade II Listed Building
 - Parking and highways
 - Impact upon neighbouring occupiers
 - Other matters

Principle of The Change Of Use

- 6.2 It is proposed to change the use of the application site from a hotel (Use Class C1) to a Day Nursery (Use Class D1). The National Planning Policy Framework asserts that there is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development' and encourages Local Planning Authorities to support sustainable economic growth; providing accessible local services that reflect the community's needs. Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy identifies the town of Wellington as suitable for new development and facilities to serve the needs of the communities. The policy asserts that the District & Local Centre will contain core services and facilities, be well served by public transport and have a mix of retail, recreation, leisure and cultures, employment and housing uses. This policy links in with policy CS10 which suggests that the provision of new community facilities or improvements to existing community facilities to meet the needs of local residents will be supported. Policy LR1 of the Wrekin

Local Plan also suggests that community facilities will be permitted where they are located within a district or local centre. It is considered that the proposed use will meet the criteria set out in these policies which are also supported by the guidance contained within the NPPF.

- 6.3 Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy relates specifically to the creation of jobs. In this instance, the existing business is being relocated from a building located within the nearby hospital site and as such would not create any new jobs. However, Officers note that this site has been chosen specifically due to its size and location and will therefore retain staff, many of whom live within the local area. A total of 28 staff would be employed by the business in the new location.
- 6.4 The application site is located within a suitable area, close to the town centre and within walking distance of the surrounding residential areas. The site can also be accessed by public transport bus routes available on the main road.
- 6.5 Officers therefore consider that proposal will provide a valuable community facility in a sustainable location and will put to good use the existing listed building which is currently vacant. It is considered that sufficient justification exists to agree the principle of the change of use, subject to the consideration of other technical issues.

Impact upon the Grade II Listed Building

- 6.6 Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect the Borough's cultural, historic and built environmental assets in order to maintain and improve quality of life. This is supported by HE16 of the Local Plan which seeks to ensure that the form, character and special interest of Listed Buildings are retained. The policy suggests that changes of use will be permitted where it is in the interest of the long term survival of the building.
- 6.7 This application proposes no changes to the listed building itself and the applicant is keen to retain the character of the building. In order to create a safe play area, a wall leading off the rear corner of the property and towards the right hand boundary would be erected. The wall will be erected using facing brick to match the existing building and will replicate the appearance of the side boundary wall located to the front of the building, as detailed on the submitted plans (Plan No. DR-1-SK102 rev A).
- 6.8 The Heritage Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development subject to the submission of sample materials for the wall and details of proposed hard surfacing and landscaping. They also acknowledge that the removal of stud walls will bring the inside of the building back towards its original layout. As such, Officers are satisfied that the proposed development would have no adverse impact upon the character and setting of the Listed Building and consider that the use will assist in preserving the long term survival of the building in line with the policies outlined above and National guidance.

Highways and Parking

- 6.9 Officers note the concerns raised by the local councillor and neighbouring residents in respect of parking and highways issues. The number of people visiting and using a building and how they get to the site can have a harmful environmental impact for others in the surrounding area. It is important that an application to use a building as a nursery demonstrates how this issue will be addressed. In support of the application, the applicant has submitted a travel plan that provides information on the proposed number of children for each day (maximum 95). It also provides information on the existing modes of transport for families using the existing nursery site. This suggests that 30% of families arrive by foot, 15% by bus and the remaining 55% by car or taxi.
- 6.10 Unlike a school, a day nursery operates without strict start and end times and in this instance parents are able to drop off their children from 7:30a.m. onwards and collect them up until 6p.m. The travel statement acknowledges that some children will stay all day however a number will only stay for half days and in some cases for just a few hours in line with the governments funded nursery hours. Although there may be peak periods between 8a.m. and 9a.m. and 5p.m. and 6p.m, officers are of the view that the staggered drop off/pick up nature of the use will not lead to an unacceptable amount of additional traffic in this location and that the off road parking provided is acceptable.
- 6.11 The applicants have suggested that there are no current parking issues such as queuing for spaces at any of their existing sites. A total of 19 spaces are proposed at the new site where there will also be a reduction in children attending by around 15% on each day compared to the existing site. This reduction in numbers will reduce the requirement for spaces. In respect of parking spaces for staff, the owners operate a car share scheme and intend to introduce a cycle to work scheme. At the existing site, 11 staff share 5 spaces on a one week on, one week off basis, 6 staff walk to work and 10 use the local bus route. It is proposed to reduce the number of staff at the new site which again will reduce the need for parking spaces on site.
- 6.12 Officers are aware of the concerns of residents living on roads situated to the rear of the site and that it would be possible for parents to park here and walk through the alleyway to the right hand side. The site owners have been made aware of these concerns and will ask parents to avoid parking on the residential streets and use the car parking provided. The applicants have made clear that they wish to work with neighbours to avoid any issues.
- 6.13 Deliveries to the site would be twice a week and after 9:30a.m. All deliveries can be made with access to the front of the building off the highway.
- 6.14 Following initial concerns raised by the Highways Officer, the parking layout has been altered to provide adequate manoeuvring space between the proposed parking bays. They have also introduced dedicated staff parking spaces near to the vehicular entrance and a dedicated pedestrian entrance.

- 6.15 The Council's Highways Department have requested a contribution of £3,000 towards the placement of double yellow lines to the front of the site to help avoid parking on the highway and to assist improved visibility when exiting the site. This has been accepted by the applicant and will help ensure the free flow of traffic to the front of the building is retained and avoids parking on a busy section of road leading out of Wellington. This would overcome some of the concerns raised by the Councillor and local residents as to parking and highway safety on Whitchurch Road.
- 6.16 In conclusion of the highway and parking considerations, Officers are satisfied that the level of parking provided to the front of the building is acceptable and would not lead to an adverse impact upon the surrounding highways. There is also a good level of public transport on the adjacent road, with the site also being within walking distance of Wellington Town Centre. Notwithstanding the objections received, there are no sustainable reasons to refuse the application on highways or parking grounds. Additionally, the applicants propose to encourage a reduction in car use by staff and will work with neighbours to overcome concerns relating to parking on the adjacent residential roads.

Impact upon Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.17 The other principle concern raised by neighbouring residents relates to noise that may be created by children playing outside. It is likely that the use of a play/garden area will result in use by a larger number of children than a normal residential property and on a more daily basis (weather permitting) and as such, this is a significant consideration given the locality of neighbouring residential dwelling. Officers acknowledge that activities within the building may also create some noise, however, given that it is detached property of brick built construction and is set away from neighbouring buildings, this will not cause any significant harm the amenities of neighbours.
- 6.18 The existing garden area is surrounded by a high level hedge which in part will partly mitigate noise from the site. However, it is considered that to avoid a significant number of children playing outside at any one time, numbers should be regulated. After consulting with the applicant, they have agreed that a condition stipulating that no more than 16 children can play outside at any one time can be attached to the decision. Officers are of the view that the numbers proposed will not result in an unacceptable level of noise to neighbouring residents.

Other Matters

- 6.19 One neighbouring occupier raised concerns over the height of the hedge surrounding the rear of the site, stating that it affects light into the adjacent houses. A high hedge surrounding the site is important as it limits the impact of the development and any related noise, but if allowed to grow too high it would impact upon light and outlook of the neighbours which have short gardens to the rear. In addition, the hedge is important to the character and setting of the Listed Building and should be retained. As such officers consider it appropriate to condition that the height of the hedge is maintained

between 2m and 2.7m accordingly. This allows for some growth throughout the year.

- 6.20 The applicants recognise that signage is important as this can affect the character of the building which is listed as being of special character. The applicant proposes to submit such details on a subsequent advertisement application.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed change of use will create an acceptable long term use for this Grade II listed building without adversely affecting its character and appearance. The application property is within a sustainable location close to Wellington Town Centre and is easily accessible by foot and bus from surrounding residential areas. The level of parking provided on the site is also considered acceptable and, subject to the S.106 agreement, would not lead to unsuitable parking on the public highway. Finally, subject to the attached conditions, it is not considered that the use would cause an unacceptable level of noise to adversely affect the amenities of the neighbouring dwellings. The proposed change of use from a hotel to a day nursery therefore complies with the policies outlined above including national guidance contained within the NPPF.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that the Committee **GRANT DELEGATED AUTHORITY** to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following:
- A) The applicant/landowners entering into a Section 106 Agreement with the Local Planning Authority (terms to be agreed by the Development Management Service Delivery Manager) relating to:
- (i) A contribution of £3,000 towards highways improvements (to be spent specifically on the implementation of double yellow lines to the front of the application site on Whitchurch Road)
- B) The following conditions:
1. A04 Time Limit – Commencement within 3 years
 2. B014 Samples of materials – Wall and hard surfacing
 3. B015 Sample Brick Panel
 4. B121 Landscaping Design
 5. C013 Parking and Turning
 6. C020cu Highways custom – Double yellow lines prior to commencement
 7. C38 Development in accordance with deposited plans
 8. DCustom Numbers for Outdoor Play
 9. DCustom Height of Boundary Hedge

Informatives

I40 Conditions

I41 Reasons for Grant

RANPPF2 Approval Following Amendments