



UPDATE REPORT

FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING OF 5th September 2023

B6 – 2023/0341 – Clairemoor House, Tonacliffe Way, Whitworth

Further to publication of the Committee report, officers would like to bring to Members' attention two objections received since the publication of the Committee agenda. In summary, the objections raise the following issues:

1. Dissatisfaction over attempts to publicise the application: local residents have either not been notified of the application or very few local residents have received letters. The site notice displayed is also poorly sited.
2. There is no mention of the company's name who have purchased the property, which has prevented residents from researching the due diligence of the company.
3. Traffic concerns / insufficient space to accommodate 5 vehicles on the drive of the property, and traffic/parking issues relating to school traffic from nearby school posing risk to safety.
4. Possibility of anti-social behaviour from the development.
5. Concern over the nature of the provision being proposed, and the difficulty in placing children in local schools and the potential impact this will have on their wellbeing and the amenity of residents.
6. Impact of increased noise and lack of privacy from the development.
7. The submitted plans are not accurate as they fail to include the property currently being built next door to the application property – which will also add to the traffic experienced on Tonacliffe Way.
8. Impact of development on the value of property.

Officers can confirm that four neighbouring properties were notified of the proposal by letter and a site notice publicising the application was displayed near to the application site.

It is noted that the property currently being built on the adjacent site has not been included on the proposed plans, however, it is not considered that the additional traffic generated by this property and the proposed use of Clairemoor House would have a material impact on the levels of traffic experienced on the local highway network.

Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that perceived loss of property value is not a material planning consideration.

In response to the other issues listed above, the planning agent has provided an additional statement which is repeated in full below and available to view online. Overall, there is no change proposed to the recommendation contained in the Committee report.

Introduction

We would offer this statement in answer to some of the objections raised against the above planning application:

Nature of Provision / Management of the Home / Experience of the Applicant

The home will be registered with and regulated by Ofsted. There are a set of highly stringent regulations, adherence to which must be evidenced in order for Ofsted to agree the registration. Included in this is the enhanced vetting of employees and also there is a requirement for the home to complete an in-depth location risk assessment and local area report, which will be taken into consideration when reviewing potential child placements. The qualifications, skills and experience of the staff team at the home will also form part of the matching process for prospective children, as the home will have to evidence how they are able to meet the individual needs of each child placed.

The residential childcare workforce is a highly skilled, well trained and often specialist sector. There is a regulatory requirement to undertake both mandatory and additional training to meet the needs of the specific children in their care. This includes knowledge and understanding of attachment theory and trauma informed care. The proposal will bring several highly trained, skilled and well-paid jobs to the local economy.

The organisation that will be setting up the home run a successful fostering business, and so are already experienced in the children's social care workforce sector and are therefore familiar with the relevant requirements. The business will have a qualified and experienced senior management team to oversee the day-to-day running of the home and the quality of care provided. It is a statutory requirement that the home will also be independently inspected on a monthly basis to monitor the quality of care provided.

Upon planning permission being obtained and necessary adaptations being made to the property, the senior management team plan on arranging an open day. Neighbours will be able to visit and speak to the provider/senior management team and discuss any concerns, as well as learning more about the processes and procedures in place.

Parking/Traffic

The staff team on duty at any one time would consist of three persons. In addition the registered manager (non-resident staff) would spend time at the property overseeing the management of the home. Staff changeover would be staggered as previously mentioned, meaning that one additional car may be present for up to thirty minutes at a time per shift. It will be in everyone's interest to schedule these changeover times to avoid the peak parking demand generated by the school run so as to minimise impact on traffic. This pattern of vehicle movements is therefore probably going to be even less disruptive than its current use as a residential dwelling. As a last resort, there is room to accommodate further parking within the property boundary if required, however the existing provision will be enough given the anticipated size of the staff team.

Noise/Privacy

The aim of any childrens' residential home is to replicate as close as possible a loving family home environment to support children in their recovery from trauma they may have experienced prior to being taken into care. Any typical family home can be

expected to generate some degree of noise where children are resident – whether this be playing in the garden or practicing their musical instruments. The risk of anti-social behaviour is no greater than with any other family who may move in and in fact, residential care practitioners are better equipped and trained to manage children's behaviour than most parents.

In terms of privacy, the children accepted in to the home would have no greater interest in their neighbours than any other child would, so it is difficult to understand why this is an issue being raised.

Conclusion

A suburban residential location such as this will enable the best opportunity for looked after children to successfully integrate positively into the local community. Children in care are predominantly there due to circumstance beyond their control, including being victims of abuse and neglect. They deserve the opportunity to live in a caring and compassionate environment free from discrimination and judgement.

Storm Grimshaw
Senior Planning Officer
DATE: 31/08/2023