

**Planning Committee**

17 June 2014

**Reference:**  
**APP/14/00237**

**Area Team:**  
**North Team**

**Case Officer:**  
**Mrs S Lacey**

**Ward:**  
**Claughton**

**Location:** 7 ALEXANDRA ROAD, BIRKENHEAD, CH43 4XX  
**Proposal:** Change of use from 6 bedroom property to an 8 bedroom supported accommodation/House of Multiple Occupation (HMO)  
**Applicant:** Mrs Benoni  
**Agent :** CADStation Ltd

**Site Plan:**



**Development Plan allocation and policies:**

Primarily Residential Area

**Planning History:**

No planning history for this property

**Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**

**REPRESENTATIONS**

Having regard to the Council's Guidance on Publicity for Applications, 18 notifications were sent to adjoining properties. A Site Notice was also displayed. A qualifying petition of 34 signatures and 2 individual letters of objection have been received from No.6 Alexandra Road citing the following concerns:

1. Disturbance;
2. Increased traffic and parking problems;
3. Foot traffic;
4. Residents' safety and the potential for increased police visits;
5. Devaluation of property;
6. Lack of information regarding the proposal;
7. Could affect residents chance of fostering.

**CONSULTATIONS**

Head of Environment & Regulation (Pollution Control Division) - no objections to the proposal

Head of Environment & Regulation (Highway Management Division) - no objections to the proposal

**Director's Comments:**

**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

A qualifying petition of objection with 34 signatures has been received. Therefore, under the provisions of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Determining Planning Applications, this application is required to be considered by the Planning Committee.

**INTRODUCTION**

The application proposes accommodation providing semi-independent living (C2 Use) to provide supported living for young adults leaving care (aged 16 to 18). There is capacity for up to 8 residents to stay at any one time. The residents' share the communal lounge and kitchen area. There is 24 hour staff supervision providing training for independent living. The organisation has been run for the last 5 years.

**PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

Proposals for C2 care uses in Primarily Residential Areas are acceptable in principle subject to the provisions of policy HS8 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan, SPG9 and the NPPF.

**SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The brick semi-detached building is situated in a residential street designated as a Primarily Residential Area. The site provides one off-street parking space, and there are no restrictions on the highway. There is a small yard to the rear. No external alterations are proposed.

**POLICY CONTEXT**

The application shall be assessed against policy HS8 Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan, SPG9 Sheltered Housing and Residential Care Homes, SPD4 Parking Standards and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy HS8 sets out proposals should not result in an over-concentration of residential care or nursing homes in an area. SPG9 specifies the number of residential homes should not exceed 20% of the total number of properties in the street frontage. SPD4 sets out maximum numbers of car parking spaces - 1 space per 3 staff plus 1 visitor space per 6 residents. The NPPF requires a wide choice of high quality homes to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Development Management Policies in the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton are also applicable. Policy WM8 requires development to incorporate measures for achieving efficient use of resources, Policy WM9 also requires development to provide measures for waste collection and recycling, including home composting.

#### **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

Policy HS8 sets out proposals should not result in an over-concentration of residential care or nursing homes in an area. SPG9 specifies the number of residential homes should not exceed 20% of the total number of properties in the street frontage. The site is located in a residential area of dwellings and some buildings have been split into flats. In this instance it is considered the proposal is read within a street scene of 22 residential buildings, resulting in the proposal not exceeding 20% of the street frontage. The proposal is considered to be of a suitable scale within the residential area, and is not considered to result in an over-concentration of residential care in the area.

Neighbours have raised concerns regarding the potential of a damaging impact on residential surroundings, with concerns regarding the potential behaviour of tenants. Both local and national planning policy looks to integrate care homes into the local community, and it is considered a wide and varied range of land uses could help to create environments that were lively and well-used, thus deterring criminal activity.

Care homes can increase activity in terms of comings and goings and general noise, and inadequate space for requirements such as parking, dustbins and poor standard of maintenance can also affect the character of the residential area. Highly intensive uses can give rise to a level of activity out of keeping with the street and wear and tear on the fabric of the houses themselves could also occur. Transient populations may not relate to the established community. However the existing building is considered to be of a scale that can accommodate the proposal. The size of the building and the number of occupants (up to 8 young persons) are considered not to generate a level of activity which could affect the privacy and quietness neighbouring residents were entitled to expect. The use is managed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The intervention of the Local Planning Authority into the field of matters otherwise controllable under housing or environmental health powers may only be justified when the overcrowding implied has a knock-on effect on wider amenity or land use concerns. Government policy in NPPF encourages a flexible approach to standards, and the room sizes and shared facilities are considered acceptable. The existing windows are utilised and provide a good level of outlook and daylight. Amended plans were received on 28 May 2014 moving bedroom 5 to the rear of the property to allow for a better outlook. There is adequate amenity space for recreation, dustbin storage and cycle parking space for the inhabitants, which can be conditioned.

The property is semi-detached and the adjoining property No.22 is a single residential property. Environmental Health were consulted and had no objection to the application, and did not request any conditions. It is therefore considered sound emanating from the property would be likely not to give rise to unacceptable noise disturbance. The use is considered to generate more activity than a traditional family house, however it is considered that the level of activity would not be so significant that it would impact adversely on the living conditions of local residents.

#### **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

Habitable room windows directly facing each other should be at least 21 metres apart. Main habitable room windows should be at least 14 metres from any blank gable. The proposal will utilise the existing windows. As such it is considered there are no issues regarding loss of privacy or overlooking.

#### **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

The Council's adopted parking standards SPD4 require maximum parking standards, which the proposal complies with. Highway Engineers had no objection to the proposal and did not recommend any conditions. The site is considered a sustainable residential area as it is within walking distance of Birkenhead Key Town Centre with good bus routes, train links and local amenities. It is considered residents would have a low level of car ownership. Cycle parking provision can be conditioned.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to these proposals. Environmental Health had no objection to the proposal and did not request planning conditions. The application is for the

retention of an existing use and arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse is made within the curtilage of the site. The proposal complies with policies WM8 and WM9 of the Waste Local Plan.

There are no environmental or sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

#### **HEALTH ISSUES**

There are no health implications relating to this application.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The proposal is not considered detrimental to the character of the residential area, or cause nuisance to the surrounding residential areas by virtue of its scale and use. The proposal complies with Council policy HS8 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan, SPG9 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Summary of Decision:**

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

The proposal is not considered detrimental to the character of the residential area, or cause nuisance to the surrounding residential areas by virtue of its scale and use. The proposal complies with Council policy HS8 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan, SPG9 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Recommended Decision:**                      **Approve**

#### **Recommended Conditions and Reasons:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved amended plan received by the local planning authority on 28 May 2014 and listed as follows: drawing number 670-01 B (dated Feb. 14)

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

3. No more than eight residents shall occupy No.7 Alexandra Road at any one time.

**Reason:** In the interest of amenity

4. No part of the development shall be brought into use until space and facilities for cycle parking of a type and in a location previously submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority have been provided and these facilities shall be permanently retained thereafter.

**Reason:** In the interests of highway safety and to accord with Policy TR12 in the in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan 2000

5. PRIOR TO FIRST OCCUPATION OR USE OF THE DEVELOPMENT, arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse, and vehicle access thereto, shall be made within the curtilage of the site, in accordance with details previous submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the first occupation of the building.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory appearance and adequate standards of hygiene and refuse collection, having regard to Waste Local Plan Policy EM9.

**Further Notes for Committee:**

**Last Comments By:** 25/04/2014 10:43:17  
**Expiry Date:** 08/05/2014