

## Item No. 9

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/17/02942/REG3</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Puddlehill (Former All Saints Vicarage), Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DJ</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Refurbishment and extension of existing detached property (the former Vicarage) to provide accommodation in the form of 5 nos individual bedrooms in the original house and 8 nos studios in the new extension, including ancillary spaces such as office, laundry, shower rooms, communal areas and parking in order to provide supported accommodation and service hub for the vulnerable members of our communities</b>
<b>PARISH</b>	<b>Houghton Regis</b>
<b>WARD</b>	<b>Houghton Hall</b>
<b>WARD COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>Cllrs Mrs Goodchild &amp; Kane</b>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Nicola Darcy</b>
<b>DATE REGISTERED</b>	<b>31 May 2017</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>26 July 2017</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Central Bedfordshire Council – Housing Directorate</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	<b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b>
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>Regulation 3 application with a neighbour objection</b>
	<b>Full Application recommended for approval</b>

### **Summary of Recommendation:**

The proposed development would not detrimentally impact upon the character and appearance or wider street scene nor would there be any significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents. The proposal would not result in any highway, parking or other issues. The proposal would result in a high quality scheme providing accommodation for vulnerable people. The scheme by reason of its siting and design is in conformity with Sections 6, 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies H2, H9 and BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review 2004, and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

### **Site Location:**

Puddlehill is located on Bedford Road, a few hundred metres to the north-west of the centre of Houghton Regis. The site is bound by Bedford Court, Central Bedfordshire Council's temporary accommodation scheme to the south, Thomas Whitehead Church of England school to the east and residential development to the north and west.

Although the site is predominantly level, it lies on a hill with the land sloping to the south towards the High Street.

The neighbouring properties are all two storey residential buildings with the

exception of the school, which is a single storey building.

Puddlehill is generously set back from Bedford Road, behind a line of mature trees. The house occupies the central part of approximately 0.9 acres of surrounding grounds.

The existing building is a two-storey, pitched roof property with an integrated garage to the side of the main accommodation.

### **The Application:**

The application proposes the refurbishment and extension of the existing detached property (the former Vicarage) to provide accommodation in the form of 5 nos individual bedrooms in the original house and 8 nos studios in a new extension, including ancillary spaces such as office, laundry, shower rooms, communal areas and parking in order to provide supported accommodation and service hub for the vulnerable members of our communities.

Summary of proposed works:

1. Garage conversion into an office with a changing room and an accessible shower room.
2. A new, improved and fully accessible single storey entrance area to link the existing house with the garage conversion.
3. Extension of the existing Study in the main house into a larger Office for the on site support staff.
4. A new two storey garden extension to accommodate 8 nos. of self - contained studios.
5. Improved parking to accommodate 19 parking spaces in total, including 2 disabled parking spaces.
6. New cycle parking spaces.
7. New easily accessible refuse store.
8. New automated vehicular and pedestrian gate to the property.
9. Improved garden access and landscaping.
10. Repair and/or replacement of the existing boundary fencing where required.

### **RELEVANT POLICIES:**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)**

6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
7. Requiring good design
8. Promoting healthy communities
11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

#### **South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review**

- Policy BE8 Design Considerations
- Policy T10 Controlling Parking in New Developments
- Policy H2 Making Provision for Housing via "Fall-in" sites
- Policy H9 Conversion to provide additional accommodation

(Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, the age of the plan and general

consistency with the NPPF, policies BE8 and H2 are still given significant weight. Policy T10 is given less weight)

## **Local Plan**

The Council is currently consulting on its Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18). The Plan outlines the overarching strategy for growth and also sets out more detailed policies which will be used to determine planning applications. A substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years supports this document. These technical papers are consistent with the aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore will remain on the Council's website as material considerations, which will, along with the direction of travel of the Local Plan, inform development management decisions.

## **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents**

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

### **Relevant Planning History:**

None

### **Consultees:**

Houghton Regis Town Council	Comments: The Town Council made no objection to this application and acknowledged the amendments being made to accommodate the privacy of the residents of the adjoining property. However, the Town Council raised the following concerns. That the increase in vehicle movements into and out of the site now necessitated some form of traffic calming in the surrounding area. Members requested they discuss their concerns with the appropriate officers from Central Bedfordshire Council, in the hope of reaching a solution. It was felt that the junction of St Michaels Avenue was of particular concern. Another concern raised was as to whether vehicles, accessing the site, would be able to pull off Bedford Road whilst the automated gates opened. In regard to the name of the proposed development the Town Council requested that Central Bedfordshire Council consults with the Town Council in regards to the naming of the proposed development. Puddlehill is an area known in history as an area around Chalk Hill and therefore not near the site. An alternative name was suggested – Millard House - however the Town Council would like the opportunity for the name to be discussed by Full Council.
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Pollution Officer

I have visited the site and looked through the application plans, as well as discussing the proposal with the Agent. The main concerns with the proposal from an environmental impacts perspective is from noise generated by the intensification of the residential use impacting on neighbouring residential occupiers. This can include noise from occupants (we have dealt with noise

complaints from similar temporary accommodation units relating to loud music, shouting and general anti-social behaviour) and from vehicles arriving and leaving the site (it is noted that there will be an increased level of parking provision on site which is likely to reflect an increased level of vehicle movements on site). However, there is already a certain level of traffic noise associated with the location arising from Bedford Road, and any increase with on-site vehicle movements is considered unlikely to lead to a significant increase in vehicle noise levels in this area and an adverse detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers as a result.

However, I am advised that this will be a managed site with staff present on site on a 24/7 basis, which should serve to control noise associated with the behaviour of occupants. Similarly, I am informed that there will also be an entry gate with secure keypad access to limit vehicular access to provide some degree of control of authorised access and vehicle movements on site. As such, on this basis I have no objection to the proposed use which will bring an existing vacant and boarded up residential building back into beneficial residential use. I would suggest that the 3 parking spaces proposed along the boundary fence with the adjacent neighbouring property (28 Bedford Road) be reserved for staff only to reduce the number of vehicle movements associated with these particular parking places.

I have no other observations in respect of potential impacts from odour, light or land contamination associated with this proposed application.

Highways Officer

I refer to the consultation to the above application for which you have requested my comments and I advise as follows:

The proposal is for a care facility with the provision of 8 studio flats and 5 bedrooms in the main building along with 19 parking spaces. There is not a parking standard for this type of development within the authority's guide but having experience of this type of facility I am content that parking provision is adequate. There is not a turning area for a vehicle likely to need to take access and while I believe that this can be accommodated it will need to be discussed to determine the actual provision. The access is shown to be 3.4m wide and this is not sufficient and should be 4.1m with lateral clearance. Bedford Road has been subject to a traffic calming scheme but still subject to a 30mph speed limit and as a result the visibility required would be 2.4m by 43m. The access will need extending and while this can be conditioned it has to be remembered that there are a number of trees fronting the site that may be protected and restrict the improvement to the access. As a result if you will be seeking a revised drawing may I suggest that they address the issues

above and once it has been confirmed that there are not any restraints in relation to protected trees then I would be happy to offer standard conditions.

I am also aware that some of these establishments require security such that it is difficult to allow for deliveries to enter the premises at all. This will need to be discussed if access is restricted in this way as it will affect the public highway.

I welcome a revised drawing addressing the above issue and confirmation that there are not any restraints in relation to trees fronting the site before I make my full recommendation.

Trees and Landscape  
Officer

I have examined the plans and documents associated with this application, in particular the supporting document "Arboricultural Impact Assessment", as prepared by Wharton Tree and Ecology Consultants, dated May 2017 (Ref. No. 030517 0576 AIA V1).

I accept that the Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies only low quality trees are being removed, and that higher quality trees should not be adversely affected to any significant extent, providing that the necessary protection measures are fully implemented. In this respect, the following conditions are therefore recommended, if you are minded to grant consent to this application:-

Prior to development, an Arboricultural Method Statement shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval, which shall stipulate all the required working practices, and the procedure to implement all necessary tree protection requirements, both before and throughout the course of development works. The approved Arboricultural Method Statement shall then be fully implemented at the required sequence of operations, throughout all stages of development, under the supervision/guidance of an appointed Arboricultural Clerk of Works.

REASON: To ensure that retained trees are protected, both directly and indirectly, from all types of construction site activity, throughout the entire course of development.

Prior to development, a finalised Tree Protection Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved Tree Protection Plan shall then be implemented before the commencement of development, in strict accordance with the design specifications and the Arboricultural Method Statement. The Tree Protection Fencing and Ground Protection shall then remain securely in position throughout the entire course of development.

REASON: To ensure that the designated Root Protection Areas of retained trees are fully protected, in order to prevent their rooting systems, and rooting medium, from incurring excavation and compaction damage.

19/10/17

I have examined the revised plans in respect of the amended access, following concerns regarding the impact on a good quality Beech tree. I am satisfied that this is sufficient to retain this tree, and I therefore request that my previous recommended conditions still apply, if you are minded to grant consent to this application.

### **Other Representations:**

29 Bedford Road

Objection

We are very concerned regarding road safety related to the increased number of people living at the extended property.

Egress from our single drive to numbers 28 & 29 Bedford Road is currently very dangerous due to the sight restrictions caused by the adjacent lay-by and the excess speed of traffic (car AND commercial) travelling up the hill from the Red Lion direction.

We feel that access and egress from the new development should be the same as, or adjacent to, the Bedford Court driveway.

We heard there is some concern regarding tree preservation orders but, despite our general approval of such preservation, we believe that human life is more important than the life of a couple of trees.

We trust you will look into this most seriously.

### **Considerations**

#### **1.0 Principle of Development**

- 1.1 The site lies within the built up area of Houghton Regis in an area of mixed but predominantly residential uses. The property (last used as a domestic dwellinghouse), once refurbished, will be used by 'The Independent Living Team'. The specific user group might vary depending on the local needs and pressures, but could include, among others, young care leavers, people with learning difficulties and asylum seekers. No two different groups would be using the scheme at the same time.
- 1.2 National and local planning policies seek to promote the integration of care facilities into the wider community as part of the promotion of health and healthy lifestyles.

- 1.3 The South Bedfordshire Local Plan pre-amble to policy H9 states that the conversion or sub-division of suitable properties to provide additional units can be an important source of dwellings and a means of adapting the existing housing stock to meet the changing needs of the population. There is, however, a need to protect the amenities and privacy of neighbouring properties and the character of residential areas when such development is proposed.
- 1.4 Policy H9 seeks to ensure that the conversion of existing sites does not result in noise transfer between dwellings, pressure for on-street parking and the loss of amenities for occupants and neighbours.
- 1.5 Policy H2 further seeks to ensure that the development of existing sites would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
- 1.6 The current building requires significant refurbishment and lies within a spacious plot, well screened with mature landscaping.
- 1.7 Therefore, subject to the proposal being acceptable in terms of residential amenity and highway impact, the principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with relevant planning policy including local plan policies H2 and H9.

## **2.0 Design**

- 2.1 The proposed supported housing scheme envisages two extensions to the existing building thus increasing its capacity from 5 bedrooms to 13 bedsits and studios with communal and support staff facilities.
- 2.2 A single storey, predominantly flat roof extension is proposed to the side of the existing house, creating a new entrance to the scheme. The single storey extension would follow the line of the existing garage wall, which means that the same distance would be maintained to the boundary with the neighbouring two storey property to the north as is the case at the moment.
- 2.3 The pitched roof over the garage has been partially extended over the extension. Flat roof has been specified in the entrance area to reduce the overall visual impact of the extension.
- 2.4 The two storey extension occupies the central part of the garden. The orientation of the new extension is north-east – south-west. The long side wall of the extension is 9 metres away from the boundary with Bedford Court. The only window on that elevation is the first floor corridor window. There is a dense green screen between Bedford Court and Puddlehill consisting of mature trees and hedging, which almost completely blocks the view of Bedford Court when standing in the garden of Puddlehill, or indeed in the first floor bedrooms of the existing house. The distance of the north-east elevation of the extension to the boundary with Thomas Whitehead school is 21 metres. To minimize the impact of the new two storey extension whilst maintaining the same roof pitch as the existing house, a pitched roof has been specified with a flat crown roof top. No point of the new extension would have any element higher than the ridge level of the existing roof. The studios in the new extension would have dormer windows, resulting in the reduced overall height of the extension.
- 2.5 The retention of much of the existing mature planting, to the highway frontage would ensure that the building is provided with a landscape context that would minimise its visual impact on the wider area.
- 2.6 Due to the sympathetic siting and design of the proposed extension, the proposed development is considered to comply with local plan policy BE8.

## **4.0 Residential Amenity**

- 4.1 The proposed extension would be adjacent to Bedford Court, however, there is significant, mature dense screening along the shared boundary which should totally screen the extension from the existing residents.

4.2 The Pollution Officer is satisfied that the 24 hour site attendance would address any anti-social noise impacts which have been an issue on other similar sites. He did however, recommend that the parking spaces against 28 Bedford Road are staff parking only to limit the impact of noise associated with cars coming and going. These spaces are now not proposed as the site layout has been amended to address the Highway Officer and Tree Officer's concerns.

## **5.0 Landscaping and Trees**

5.1 Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan sets out that trees should be retained and protected and that hard and soft landscaping appropriate in scale and design to the development should be provided.

5.2 The Tree & Landscape Officer has raised concerns about the Highway Officer's recommendation for increased site visibility and the impact upon protected trees along the site frontage. An amended plan has detailed an improvement to the impact upon the trees and as such, the Tree and Landscape Officer has no objection.

5.3 In accordance with the recommendations of the Tree & Landscape Officer, a condition is recommended to ensure that work on site shall be carried out in complete accordance with the recommendations in the Arboricultural Report.

5.4 Subject to the above mentioned condition overall it is considered that the proposal would therefore comply with policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review in relation to the provision and protection of landscaping and trees.

## **6.0 Highways and Parking**

6.1 The highway officer has recommended a revised plan in order to address his concerns (detailed above). The plan has been submitted and as such, there should not be any Highway objection as a result. The recommended conditions will be recorded on the late sheet.

6.2 The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of access and parking subject to the conditions recommended by the highway officer and, therefore, to satisfy the requirements of Local Plan Policy T10 and Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.3 The Town Council have suggested that the increase in vehicle movements into and out of the site now necessitated some form of traffic calming in the surrounding area. It was felt that the junction of St Michaels Avenue was of particular concern. Another concern raised was as to whether vehicles, accessing the site, would be able to pull off Bedford Road whilst the automated gates opened. The matters of traffic calming are for Strategic Transport to address and cannot be considered as part of this minor application. The issue with regard to vehicles waiting on the highway whilst the automated gate opens will be addressed by the Highways Officer and recorded on the late sheet. However, the location of the gates could be moved further into the site which could be secured by condition.

## **7.0 Other Considerations**

### **7.1 Human Rights issues:**

The proposal raises no Human Rights issues.

## **8.0 Equality Act 2010:**

- 8.1 The design and access statement addresses a wide range of accessibility issues, however, as the development involves a building and wider development to which the public will have access it is considered that an informative should be added to remind the applicant of the need to ensure that they address the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following:

### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development shall take place in strict accordance with the material details shown in Section 9.7 of the Design and Access Statement, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To control the appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.  
(Policy BE8, SBLPR & Section 7, NPPF)

- 3 Prior to development, an Arboricultural Method Statement shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval, which shall stipulate all the required working practices, and the procedure to implement all necessary tree protection requirements, both before and throughout the course of development works. The approved Arboricultural Method Statement shall then be fully implemented at the required sequence of operations, throughout all stages of development, under the supervision/guidance of an appointed Arboricultural Clerk of Works.

Reason: To ensure that retained trees are protected, both directly and indirectly, from all types of construction site activity, throughout the entire course of development.  
(Sections 7 & 11, NPPF)

- 4 Prior to development, a finalised Tree Protection Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved Tree Protection Plan shall then be implemented before the commencement of development, in strict accordance with the design specifications and the Arboricultural Method Statement. The Tree Protection Fencing and Ground Protection shall then remain securely in position throughout the entire course of development.

Reason: To ensure that the designated Root Protection Areas of retained trees are fully protected, in order to prevent their rooting systems, and rooting medium, from incurring excavation and compaction damage. Sections 7 & 11, NPPF)

- 5 The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or brought into use until the details of any external lighting to be installed on the site, including the design of the lighting unit, any supporting structure and the extent of the area to be illuminated, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting and any means of light shielding required shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the visual amenity of the site and its surrounding area. (Policy BE8, SBLPR & Section 11, NPPF)

- 6 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers PH5000/2.1/001 Rev C, PH5000/2.1/101, PH5000/2.1/100, PH5000/1.1/100, PH5000/1.1/002 and PH5000/1.1/001.

Reason: To identify the approved plans and to avoid doubt.

## **INFORMATIVE NOTES TO APPLICANT**

1. In accordance with Article 35 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.
3. The applicants attention is drawn to their responsibility under The Equality Act 2010 and with particular regard to access arrangements for the disabled.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that service providers must think ahead and make reasonable adjustments to address barriers that impede disabled people.

These requirements are as follows:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- Where a physical feature puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to avoid that disadvantage or adopt a reasonable alternative method of providing the service or exercising the function;

- Where not providing an auxiliary aid puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to provide that auxiliary aid.

In doing this, it is a good idea to consider the range of disabilities that your actual or potential service users might have. You should not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

For further information on disability access contact:

The Centre for Accessible Environments ([www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk))  
Central Bedfordshire Access Group ([www.centralbedsaccessgroup.co.uk](http://www.centralbedsaccessgroup.co.uk))

**Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 6, Article 35**

The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DECISION

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