

DESIGN, ACCESS & OCCUPATION STATEMENT

**Former Rehabilitation Hostel, NORTH HOUSE
Erith Road, Bexleyheath, DA7 6HZ**

CHANGE OF USE APPLICATION

Background

North House is a vacant Council-owned property, located on Erith Road, Bexleyheath. The building has been vacant for more than 24 months and the London Borough of Bexley now proposes to bring the building back into use for Temporary Accommodation (TA).

The building has been vacant since March 2019 and was formerly used by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust to provide support and enhance life skills to individuals with mental health issues.

Oxleas determined that this service could be integrated elsewhere and decommissioned the building prior to selling it in March 2019.

London Borough of Bexley is now seeking to utilise this asset for approximately 2 years whilst redevelopment plans are being finalised for the wider regeneration of the site; and are seeking to amend condition 6 of the Planning Consent referenced 00/05165/FUL. The Council is seeking a change of use from a rehabilitation hostel for residents in need of care to a general residential use. The Council proposes to use the building as temporary accommodation to assist in fulfilling its statutory duty to prevent homelessness to those whom the Council owes a duty to. The Council currently has 1,138 residents registered as homeless and in other forms of temporary accommodation at this time.

Bexley Co are finalising redevelopment plans of the wider site and propose to commence works by late Summer/ early Autumn of 2023. By which time London Borough of Bexley will cease its use and North House will be handed over to Bexley Co to enable construction works to commence.

The change of use over the proposed maximum 2 years period will allow the Council to deliver financial savings as well as meet its statutory duty.

Occupation

It is proposed that North House will be used for temporary accommodation for a period of approximately 2 years from the September 2021, accommodating up to 35 individuals including children. Whilst also retaining the option to make further use of un-utilised areas to supplement emergency winter provisions.

The accommodation will provide a mix of 5 double and 10 single units some of which will be self-contained with cooking and bathroom facilities as well as stand-alone rooms with access to shared bathrooms, kitchens and dining facilities. That will be maintained in a Covid compliant manner. For safety reasons, shared cooking and dining facilities will be restricted to the ground floor of the building.

Management

It is anticipated that North House will be managed by one of the Council's existing accommodation/ hostel management companies.

As with similar schemes, The London Borough of Bexley will ensure that the operation of North House, is covered by a range of comprehensive policies and procedures, which include the management of noise and anti-social behaviour. Whilst also recognising the rights of residents and neighbours to have peaceful enjoyment of their properties/ accommodation. The Council will not tolerate antisocial behaviour of any kind and will be committed to working with the relevant authorities and the local community to achieve this objective.

The management company will be required to have 24 hours presence at the property over the week ensuring access is restricted to residents only. To deter anti-social behaviour and enhance security the current CCTV will be serviced and activated.

Residents accommodated at North House will be required to sign a licence agreement and those who fail to adhere to the terms of the agreement may have their stay terminated resulting in a part or full discharge of the Council's housing duty towards them.

Design

There will be no physical changes to the exterior of the building or land including the refuse storage.

The internal layout will also remain unchanged except for decorations and to ensure the building meets current Building Regulation requirements.

Access

Access to North House is via Avenue Road and this will remain unchanged.

The car park will remain the same which currently accommodates 6 cars including 1 disabled space. The disabled space will be appropriately sign posted.

It is anticipated that 2 of the parking spaces will be utilised by the successful management company, although there are a number of alternative parking options across the wider site.

London Borough of Bexley's staff have visited the building on many occasions over the last 6 months and have found there to be sufficient parking not utilised and readily available, even during peak hours.

Public Transport

The following bus routes pass along Erith Road; 492, 89, 96, 99, B11, B16.

There is a South-eastern railway service within 5 minutes walking of North House at Barnehurst.

Additional Information

1. Building plans attached.
2. Relevant Council Officers (as detailed within the contract/ contract extension) reserve the right to visit the facility without notice.
3. The contract/ contract extension will be monitored via the Council's contract management procedures and will be subject to a bespoke suite of key performance indicators (KPI's).