

15 March 2024

REF: LIAI1010

Planning Department
Fenland District Council
Fenland Hall
County Road
March
PE15 8NQ

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Change of use to assisted living (C2)– Upwell Lodge, 28a Upwell Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 9DT.

On behalf of our client, Liaise, we are pleased to submit a planning application for the change of use of the existing property from Use Class C3 to Use Class C2 (to a care home for adults with complex needs). On this basis the description of development is considered as follows:

“Change of use from Use Class C3 to Use Class C2 as an adult’s care home with associated minor external works and the erection of a garden room.”

The application is submitted via the planning portal under reference PP-12759652 and comprises the following:

- Application Form and Certificate of Ownership
- Site Location and Block Plan (001)
- Existing Floor Plans (002B)
- Existing Elevations (003A)
- Proposed Floor Plans (004G)
- Proposed Elevations (005E)
- Proposed and Existing Site Plan (006C)
- Proposed Garden Room (007)
- Existing and Proposed Roof Plans (010)
- Transport Statement

I would also be grateful if you could take into consideration the contents of this letter.

The fee of £578 has been paid via the Planning Portal.

Liaise

Founded in 1995, Liaise provide and operate a comprehensive range of specialist support services for people with complex needs and specialist conditions including profound multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), down syndrome, autism, epilepsy and sensory impairments. Liaise provides invaluable care and support to its residents and their families. A key focus for Liaise, is the provision of an expanding portfolio of homes.

A Liaise home allows people living with autism, learning disabilities, physical support needs or other complex care needs to live as independently as possible in their own homes, with the reassurance that extra physical and emotional support is always available.

Site Location

The application site is located within the urban area of March, the town centre lies approximately 0.8 miles to the north west. Peterborough City Centre lies approximately 17.2 miles to the west. Upwell Road is predominantly a residential road.

The property is a detached, chalet bungalow and sits within a sizeable plot with a paved garden to the rear and a large parking area to the front with access from Upwell Road.



Figure 1: Image from Google Maps ©

The property is in close proximity to a number of services and public transport links. The closest bus stop is a 10 minute walk from the site and offers routes to Westry, Wisbech, St Ives and March. The nearest train station is March which is 1.5 miles to the north of the site.

Planning History

A review of the Council's available online records indicates one historic application.

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR02/1261/F	Conversion of loft to form additional living accommodation involving formation of 1 no. dormer window to front and 3 no. dormer windows to rear of existing dwelling.	Granted 17 th December 2002

Purpose of this Application

The application will allow for the change of use of the building from Use Class C3 to Use Class C2, facilitating the creation of four, one-bedroom, assisted living units and associated communal areas.

To enable the change in use, there will be some minor external changes and a reconfiguration of the internal layout.

Proposed Use

The change of use will facilitate the creation of four, one-bedroom units as well as shared communal areas within Use Class C2. Use Class C2 is defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as being residential institutions: *“use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within class C3 (dwelling houses)).”*

Each individual, has their own living space within the property as well as access to shared communal spaces. This approach provides the illusion of some independence to the residents whilst ensuring that appropriate support is always on hand. The support received is flexible and always adapted to the unique needs of each individual.

In this instance there will be up to 4 residents living on site and the amount of care needed by each resident will vary. Whilst carers will be on site 24 hours per day in order to provide the residents with the level of care they require; it is likely that only 2 residents will require 2:1 care, with the remainder requiring 1:1 care. Care packages are individualised to the person Liaise support, and may change during the time the resident lives at the home. At night, the residents are likely to only require 1:1 care with some shared hours.

In addition to the carers, each home will have a manager and deputy manager who will work in different shift patterns. The manager will not be based at the site and will have the use of a rented office facility in proximity to the proposed home.

Activity levels associated with the use will not be excessive. Family and friends will visit on an ad hoc basis in a way not dissimilar to that of a normal family home. The residents may attend education settings or work during the week and will typically travel to and from these locations via public transport and in the company of a carer. Most medical appointments are attended in the community however occasionally therapists may visit the home.

Proposed Alterations

As part of the change of use, the proposal includes internal and external alterations to create the four units and the communal spaces to provide an environment suitable for a residential use of this nature. This also ensures that every unit meets the Government's National Described Space Standards.

Internal changes will include the removal and erection of walls and the installation of kitchens and bathrooms in each unit.

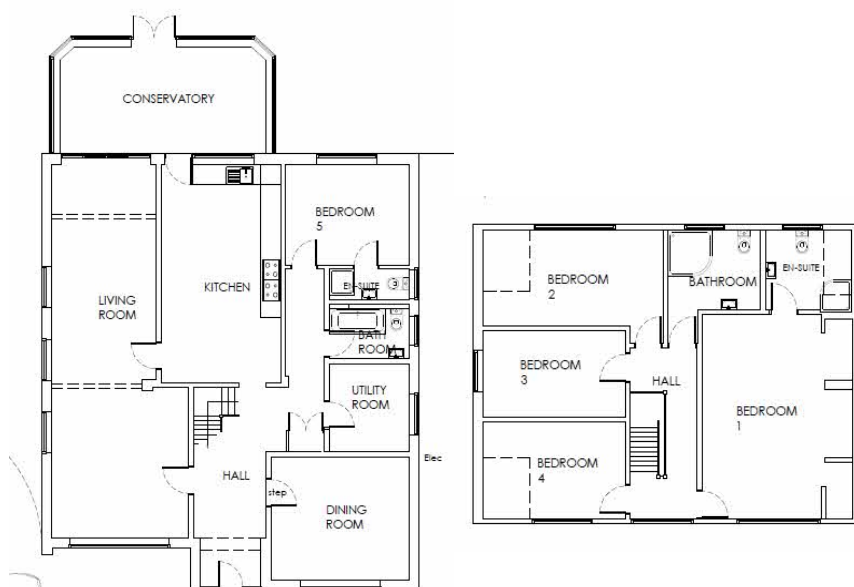


Figure 2: Existing Floor Plans

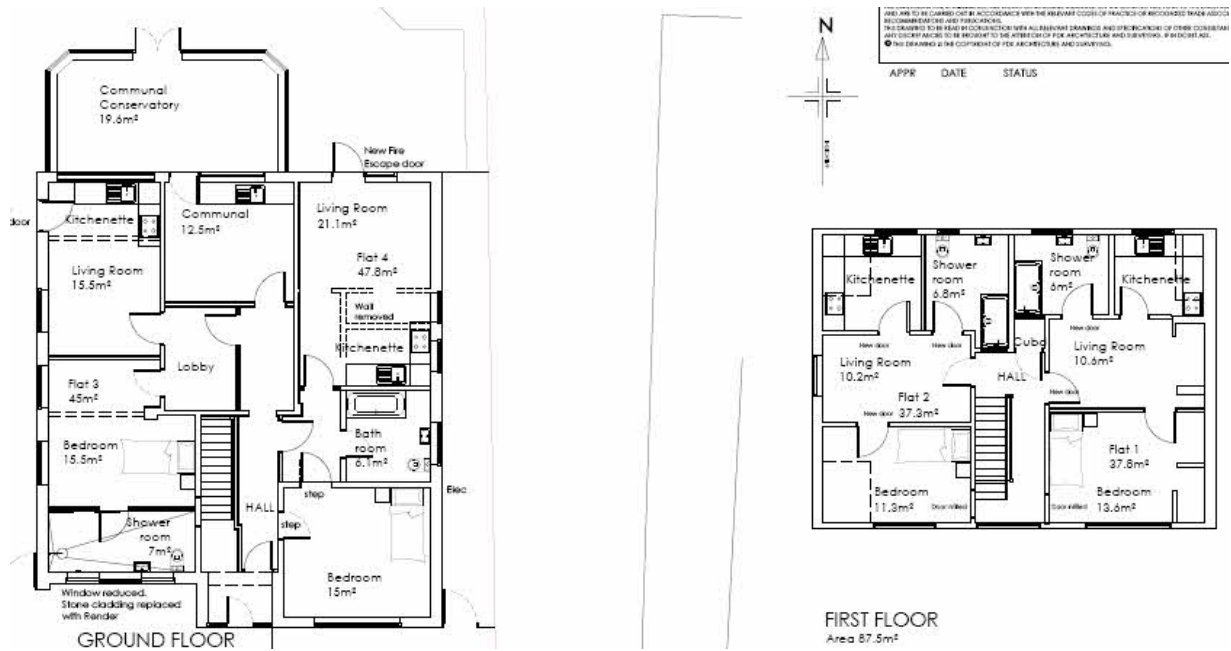


Figure 3: Proposed Floor Plans

Externally, two new doors will be installed in the northern and western elevations to allow units 3 and 4 to directly access the communal garden. The window at the front of the property, serving the proposed bathroom of unit 3, will be replaced with a smaller window to better serve the future use and the existing stone face will be replaced with render. Lastly, solar panels are added to the front elevation roof slope.



Figure 4: Existing Elevations (left) Proposed Elevations (right)

The proposal includes the erection of a small garden room in the northern area of the communal garden.



Figure 5: Proposed Garden Room

Relevant Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, in the determination of planning applications, decisions are made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for this proposal consists of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and the March Neighbourhood Plan (2017). The relevant policies are set out below.

In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) forms a material planning consideration which also must be taken into consideration.

Fenland Local Plan (2014)

Policy LP2 (Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents) sets out that development proposals should positively contribute to creating a healthy, safe and equitable living environment by creating an environment in which communities can flourish, creating sufficient and the right mix of homes to meet people's needs and in the right location.

Policy LP3 (Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside): The focus for the majority of growth is in and around the 4 market towns. Development should create strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive communities and enabling a larger number of people to access jobs, services and facilities locally. Development should provide the scale and mix of housing types that will meet the identified need for Fenland. March is identified as a Primary Market Town.

Policy LP5 (Meeting Housing Need: Part C – meeting wider housing need) sets out that the council will seek, and developers are expected, to provide, in appropriate circumstances, housing solutions that meet market expectations, including executive homes and self-build homes, as well as meeting the particular needs of all sectors of the community, such as the disabled and elderly.

Policy LP9 (March) notes that March is a focus for housing, employment and retail growth. All development should contribute to maintaining and improving March as a strong, safe and community focussed market town, preserving, enhancing and making appropriate use of its heritage assets to benefit its regeneration and sense of place.

Policy LP15 (Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland) sets out that all development proposals should demonstrate that they have regard to location to maximise accessibility and help increase the use of non-car modes. Proposals should be accompanied by a Transport Statement, the coverage detail should reflect the scale of development and the extent of the transport implications. All new development must meet the Council's defined parking standards.

Policy LP16 (Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District) sets out that development will only be permitted if it can meet a number of criteria including ensuring it does not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring users such as noise, light pollution, loss of privacy and loss of light. Sufficient private amenity space, suitable to the type and amount of development proposed must be provided. Development must not have an adverse impact on the street scene or the landscape of the surrounding area.

Policy LP17 states that parking standards must be in accordance with Appendix A of the local plan. There is specific requirement for this type of accommodation, however for accommodation of the elderly with care provision there is a requirement of 1 space per 4 residential units, plus 1 visitor space per 4 residential units plus 1 space for each resident member of staff.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework in December 2023 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into consideration in preparing the Development Plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 7). To achieve this there are three overarching objectives, consisting of economic, social and environmental, they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged (paragraphs 8 and 9). To ensure sustainable development is pursued in a positive way a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 10).

Planning Assessment

Principle of development

The Council aims to promote the health and wellbeing of the Fenland residents. Policy LP2 notes that development should provide accommodation to meet the needs for the community and should positively contribute to creating a healthy, safe and equitable living environment. Policy LP5 (Part C) seeks to provide housing solutions that meet needs of all sectors of the community.

In accordance with policy, the proposal will provide accommodation for the more vulnerable residents of the community who are in need of specialist residential housing. The internal reconfiguration to the property will provide a degree of independence to its residents as well as some control over their own environment whilst also ensuring an appropriate level of care and support can be provided around the clock.

The property is located within the settlement boundary of March, where in accordance with policies LP3 and LP9 residential development will be focused. Policy LP3 states that developments will create strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive communities. The location of the property is therefore considered to be suitable in principle due to its location and meeting the Council's aim of providing a cohesive society, providing for the needs of the community.

Suitability of the property

The use of the site for C2 use requires very minor external alterations, ensuring the property would therefore remain in keeping with the existing surrounding uses and reflective of the street in which it is situated.

The site is located within a sustainable area approximately 0.8 miles to the south of March town centre and within walking distance of daily facilities, including but not limited to, a Premier Express Store. The nearest bus stop is approximately 10 minute walk from the site, along the High Street. The nearest train station is March which is 1.5 miles with regular routes to Peterborough. The site is therefore considered to be accessible for residents as well as carers and visitors.

This is in accordance with policy LP3 and LP9 of the Local Plan and the purpose of the NPPF which direct new development towards sustainable locations.

External Appearance

The proposed external changes are both modest and in keeping with the appearance of the existing building, its surroundings. The external changes sought will utilise materials to match the existing building and will only be barely discernible from the street scene/public realm, therefore resulting in a neutral impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with policy LP16.

Amenity

The property includes a paved garden to the rear which will be used as a communal area for all residents and is considered to be of sufficient size for this purpose.

The level of activity associated with staff movements will not have a detrimental impact on amenity particularly considering the location of the property within close proximity to the centre of March and the level of on-site parking. As such, the proposals will be in accordance with policy LP16 of the Local Plan in that it will not result in an unacceptable impact with regards to privacy and noise.

Access and Parking

The site can accommodate up to five parking spaces as shown on the parking plan which is considered to be sufficient for this use. Policy LP17 states that parking standards must be in accordance with Appendix A of the local plan. For a C2 use there is a maximum requirement of 1 space per 4 residential units, plus 1 visitor space per 4 residential units plus 1 space for each resident member of staff. There are no restrictions to parking along Upwell Road.

There are good public transport links within close proximity to property. March town centre lies approximately 1.5 miles to the north, with Peterborough City Centre approximately 17 miles to the west. Cycle stands will also be provided for the use of staff, residents and visitors.

The current access from Upwell Road will be retained which is considered to have an acceptable safety record and a 2.4 x 43m visibility splay for the 30mph speed limit on the B1099 Upwell Road can be demonstrated.

The proposal demonstrates that it is in accordance with the relevant parking standards. A detailed assessment of this, is set out within the accompanying Transport Statement prepared by I-Transport.

Summary

The application will allow for the change of use of 28a Upwell Road from Use Class C3 to Use Class C2 in order to provide residential assisted living care for four adults with complex needs. External and internal works will be undertaken to facilitate the creation of four, one-bedroom units as well as shared communal areas.

Use Class C2 is defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as being a *“use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within class C3 (dwelling houses)).”*

The development is in accordance with policies set out in the Fenland Local Plan (May 2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework and is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

I trust that this letter provides sufficient information and I look forward to receiving confirmation of validation of the application in due course. If, however you should have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely



Katherine Stevens
Senior Planner

