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Planning Department
Maidstone Borough Council,
Maidstone House,
King Street,
Maidstone
ME15 6JQ

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Dear Sir/Madam,

24 Barham Mews, Teston, Maidstone, Kent, ME18 5BL | Change of use of Housing Manager's Flat to be used as an age restricted accommodation (over 55)

On behalf of our client, My Future Living, we submit this application for a change of use to allow for the Housing Manager's Flat to be used as a 1-bedroom flat, age restricted by condition.

My Future Living are the market leading UK retirement rentals company, with over 2,000 high quality apartments designed exclusively for the over 55s. My Future Living offer good quality, age-exclusive rental properties, in modern purpose-built developments across the country.

The Proposed Development

Barham Mews comprises 27 no. independent retirement living 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed flats, for the over 55's. It offers independent access for its residents, with each flat having its own kitchen, bathroom and living area. Additional assistance and facilities are also available with a Careline Alarm Service. For the reasons set out below, this application is submitted for a change of use of the Housing Manager's Flat to create 1no. age restricted 1-bed flat.

Barham Mews does not provide care services, however provides support to enable residents to live independently, including a 24-hour alarm system. Due to the way in which Barham Mews is managed, the limited level of assistance required and the ability of the residents to live independently, there is no requirement for a live-in manager. Additionally, the presence of the flat increases the running costs of the site, which in turn increases the service charge for residents.

In response to residents raising concerns over this service change, My Future Living have been reviewing their portfolio and where appropriate are seeking to reutilise the Housing Managers' Flat where they are no longer required. As part of this review, My Future Living have held ballots amongst residents to determine which properties no longer require a Manager's Flat and are seeking to reutilise the flat where this is the case.

Barham Mews is a Grade II Listed building; however Listed Building Consent is not required for this application as no physical changes are proposed to the existing building. In accordance with Planning Practice Guidance, Listed Building Consent is required for *any works to demolish any part of a listed building or to alter or extend it in a way that affects its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.*

Age Restricted Dwellings

It must be recognised that 'older people' are not a homogenous group. As recognised within Annex 2 of the NPPF, which defines older people as those 'over or approaching retirement age' this incorporates a range of 30 to 40 years and can include those that are 'active and newly retired through to the frail and very elderly'. As such, the requirements for housing are very different and the need for live-in assistance and a Warden's flat can vary significantly across different homes. In the case of Barham Mews, 24-hour assistance is available through a Careline alarm service, however residents live independently, with no requirement for a 'live-in' manager.

As set out within the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (October 2017), the population within the borough is ageing, resulting in an increasing demand for elderly accommodation over the time frame of the local plan. The differing accommodation needs across the older population is also recognised within the plan. Paragraph 6.68 confirms that specialist sheltered accommodation and/or extra care accommodation (falling under C3 use) will help meet the needs of the older population, as well as demand for care and nursing home places particularly for the more frail and elderly (falling under C2 use). In accordance with these definitions, it is concluded that Barham Mews falls under a C3 Sheltered Housing definition, rather than a C2 nursing home, and therefore the change of use from a Wardens flat to an age restricted dwelling will work to align with all the existing flats.

In addition to the justification relating to the ongoing operation and management of Barham Mews, the application will result in the added benefit of an otherwise un-occupied dwelling being reutilised and brought back into occupation with the creation of 1 no. 1-bedroom age-restricted dwelling, to compliment the other flats in the building.

We trust the information submitted is sufficient to support this application and enable the Council to determine it, however, should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Elizabeth Bisp
Planner