

Planning application no.	19/00947/FUL
Site	Mirage Youth Centre, Howland Close, WV9 5PY
Proposal	Change of Use from former Youth Centre (D1) to Residential Children's Home (C2) with internal alterations to create nine bedrooms and other ancillary spaces.
Ward	Oxley;
Applicant	Mr Anoop Nath
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Harman Banger Cabinet Member for City Economy
Accountable Director	Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration
Originating service	City Planning
Accountable employee	Jennifer Nicholds Planning Officer Tel 01902 555699 Email Jennifer.Nicholds@wolverhampton.gov.uk

1.0 Summary recommendation:

- 1.1 Delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration to grant subject to the Environment Agency withdrawing their objection.

2.0 Application site

- 2.1 The site is the former Mirage Youth Centre which has been vacant for some time. The property is situated at the end of Howland Close adjacent to areas of open space and residential dwellings.

3.0 Application details

- 3.1 The application follows a previously non-determined application which required a flood risk assessment. A flood risk assessment was submitted as part of this application
- 3.2 The proposal is to change the use of the building from a youth centre (D1) to a residential care home (C2) for up to six children with learning difficulties.

- 3.3 Internal changes will be made to create nine en-suite bedrooms, six of which are for children and three for staff members, alongside a kitchen, office, sensory room, living area, dining area, TV room, reception and bathroom.
- 3.4 Some external changes to doors and windows will be made to create a new entrance and to block some windows for privacy.
- 3.5 The scheme will use the existing car park provision of 17 general spaces plus one disabled space to accommodate up to ten full time members of staff and visitors.
- 3.6 An application was approved in 2019 for a mesh boundary fence which is intended to be implemented as part of this application (19/00091/FUL).

4.0 Relevant policy documents

- 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)

5.0 Publicity

- 5.1 Four individual letters of objection and a letter of objection signed by six people were received raising the following issues:
- Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour from the children residing in the home;
 - Disruption and road safety concerns from the coming and going of cars caused by staff and visitors to the home;
 - Noise disturbance;
 - Parking concerns.

6.0 Consultees

- 6.1 Transport: no objection.
- 6.2 Police: no objection.
- 6.3 Environment Agency: objection due to data discrepancy.
- 6.4 Children's services: no objection.

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 The legal implications arising from this report are set out below. KR/19122019/A

8.0 Appraisal

- 8.1 The site is predominantly residential and the change of use to a residential care home would not be out of character with the area. The proposal will bring a vacant building back into use to provide a needed service to the area.
- 8.2 The proposal is using the existing car park which provides 18 spaces to meet the required parking provision. There will be a maximum of 10 staff members in the day leaving at least 8 parking spaces for visitors. There will be no adverse impact regarding highway safety.
- 8.3 There will be two shift changes for members of staff around 10pm and 8am, a manager who will work Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, a monthly visit from a psychologist and a six monthly visit from social workers. The children will attend local schools. The disturbance to neighbours from cars coming and going from staff members or family would not be considerably different to that of the youth centre when it was open or that of a large residential household.
- 8.4 The children residing here will be under 24hour care with a minimum of 1:1 staff to child ratio. The staff will be trained and qualified in line with OFSTED requirements. A full management plan will be conditioned to ensure the safety of the children living in the home and the surrounding residents. There have been no objections from the Police.
- 8.5 The building is detached and not directly adjacent to any homes. A planting scheme has been submitted and there will therefore be no adverse impact to neighbour amenity in terms of noise or privacy.
- 8.6 The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted with the application has stated that the Environment Agency data is out of date and that the site is no longer in Flood Risk Zone 3 and therefore the application does not require a FRA. The Environment Agency have requested evidence of this and will not remove their objection without it. The applicant are in talks with the Environment Agency to resolve this, which may take some time therefore we are requesting delegated authority to grant subject to the removal of the objection.

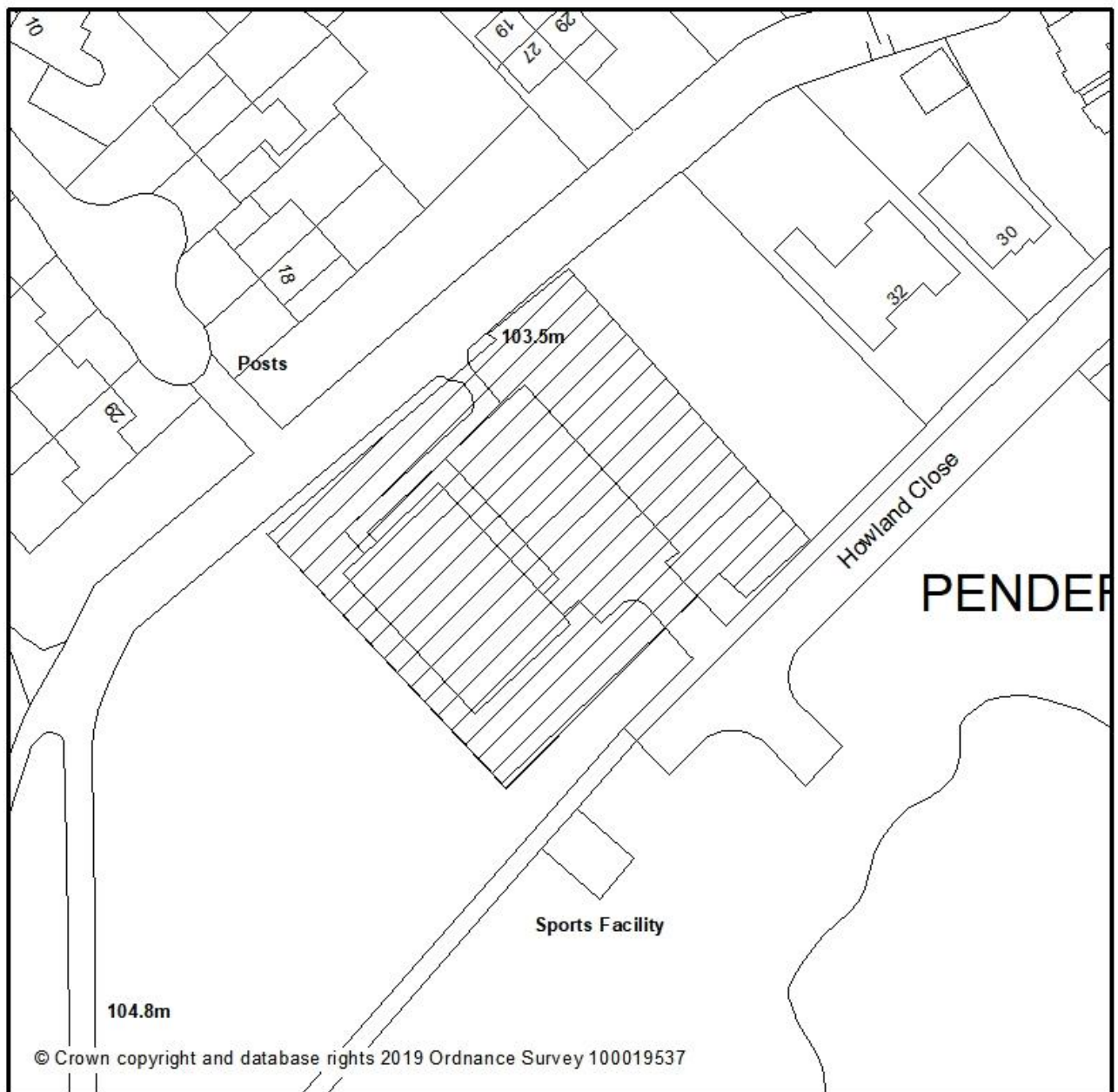
9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposed children's care home would provide a needed service. The children will be under 24-hour care to ensure a high level of care to the children but also to protect the safety and amenity of the local residents. Sufficient parking is provided to support the property and there will be minimal impact to residents in terms of staff coming and going to the property.

10.0 Detail recommendation

10.1 Grant planning subject to any necessary conditions including:

- Detailed management scheme
- Limit number of children to six
- Up to date Flood Risk Assessment to overturn the Environment Agency objection
- Bin Storage
- Bike storage
- Electrical vehicle charging points



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