



**Studio  
Charrette**

**Conversion of residential dwelling (Use Class  
C3) to a children's home for up to 2 children  
(Use Class C2)**

**1a Park Drive South, Huddersfield, HD1 4HT**

**Planning and Heritage Statement**

## Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of 1a Park Drive South from a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3 to a children's home for up to two children within Use Class C2.

The proposal would provide a domestic, stable and supportive living environment for up to two children in need of care within a conventional residential setting. No external alterations are proposed as part of the application, and the use would remain residential in character.

This submission has been prepared having regard to the previous refusal of planning permission for a similar proposal at the site. In particular, it responds directly to the Council's identified safeguarding concerns and sets out the enhanced operational and management measures now proposed. The application should therefore be considered in light of both the established acceptability of the use in land use terms and the further information now provided to address the specific and narrow reason for refusal.

This application is supported by the following documents:

- Planning application form;
- Correct fee;
- Planning and Heritage Statement (this document);
- Management Plan
- Site location plan;
- Existing plans and elevations;
- Proposed plans and elevations.

## Application Site

1a Park Drive South is a detached bungalow occupying a corner plot within a predominantly residential area. The property benefits from a large driveway, a detached garage, and an enclosed rear garden, all of which make it well suited to a low-intensity residential care use of this nature.

The site is located within the Greenhead Conservation Area. It also lies within the setting of the former Wentworth School, which is Grade II listed, and Greenhead Park, which is a Grade II registered park and garden. The surrounding area is characterised by established residential development with access to local services, schools, open space and transport links.

The property is, by its size, layout and residential appearance, capable of accommodating the proposed use without requiring material physical change. It offers a domestic environment, off-street parking, private outdoor amenity space, and sufficient separation from neighbouring occupiers to support an appropriate standard of living for future residents and continued protection of neighbouring amenity.

## Planning History

One previous application has been registered against the site:

*Change of use from residential (C3) to a children's residential care home (C2) (within a Conservation Area)*

*Ref. No: 22025/62/92612/W | Status: Refused*

Planning permission was refused for the following reason:

*1. The proposed use as a C2 residential institution, by reason of safeguarding issues identified in the immediate vicinity of the site, represents a significant risk to the safety of vulnerable residents from crime and disorder resulting in a conflict with existing uses/circumstances. To permit the development would be contrary to Policy LP1 of the Kirklees Local Plan with respect to the potential for significant adverse impacts on the future occupants of the property, chapter 8, paragraph 92 together with chapter 12, paragraph 130(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

This application has addressed the concerns relating to safeguarding of vulnerable residents in order to make the application acceptable.

## The Proposal

The proposal is for the change of use of the existing dwellinghouse from Use Class C3 to a children's home within Use Class C2 for up to two children. The home would provide care in a small-scale, family-style environment intended to meet the needs of children requiring residential support.

The proposed operation would be carefully managed and would remain domestic in its day-to-day character. The level of occupation would be low, with only up to two children resident at any one time. Care would be delivered by suitably qualified staff, with staffing arrangements tailored to the needs of individual children. It is proposed that children will be supervised on a 1:1 basis as standard where necessary, with additional staffing during settling-in periods or where a higher level of support is required.

Importantly, the home would work in partnership with Kirklees Children's Services. It has been agreed that placements would be limited to children from within the Kirklees local authority area. This is a significant material consideration in the context of the previous refusal, as it would reduce the likelihood of children being placed at a distance from their established support networks and, in turn, reduce the risk of distress-based absconding or attempts to return to another area.

Children would not travel independently in a way that would undermine their safety or the proper functioning of the home. They would be dropped off and collected from school and activities by staff as required. Visits to the park or other recreational activities would be supervised and managed by staff. The accompanying management plan sets out the detailed operational framework that would govern the use and directly addresses the safeguarding concerns raised previously, including matters raised by West Yorkshire Police.

## Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory development plan comprises the Kirklees Local Plan (adopted 27 February 2019). Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework and the Kirklees Planning Guidance for Children's Homes 2025.

The most relevant policies of the Kirklees Local Plan are:

- LP1 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- LP2 – Place Shaping
- LP7 – Efficient Use of Buildings
- LP11 – Housing Mix
- LP22 – Parking
- LP24 – Design

At national level, the NPPF supports healthy, inclusive and safe communities and seeks to ensure that planning decisions promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. It also requires development to be sympathetic to local character, including the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

## Assessment

### Principle of Development

The proposal involves the re-use of an existing residential property to provide a small children's home for up to two residents. This is a highly modest form of residential institution, operating from a conventional dwelling in a manner that remains closely aligned with the residential character of the area.

The previous refusal is important in framing the assessment of this application. The refusal was not based on any in-principle objection to the use of the site as a children's home, nor on concerns regarding the character of the area, the effect on neighbouring amenity, parking provision, or the capacity of the property to accommodate the use. Rather, the refusal was narrowly and specifically concerned with safeguarding issues arising from the site's immediate context.

That distinction is significant. It confirms that the Council has effectively accepted that the site is physically capable of accommodating a children's home and that, as a matter of land use planning, such a use is not inherently unacceptable in this residential location. The principal issue for determination is therefore whether the safeguarding concerns previously identified have now been satisfactorily addressed.

In this respect, the current proposal materially differs from the refused scheme by providing a more robust and clearly defined operational framework. Since the refusal, contact has been made with Kirklees Children's Services and it has been agreed that the home will work in partnership with them. Children placed at the property would be from within the Kirklees local authority area only. This approach would significantly reduce the prospect of children being displaced from their local support networks and correspondingly reduce the likelihood of running away or becoming vulnerable in an unfamiliar area.

In addition, the home would operate under a detailed management plan which directly addresses the concerns previously raised, including concerns from the police regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable children. The proposal is therefore not simply a repeat of the earlier scheme, but a revised and strengthened submission which responds directly to the identified harm.

In these circumstances, the proposal accords with the broad aims of Policies LP1, LP2 and LP7 by making efficient use of an existing building in a sustainable residential location and contributing to the provision of needed care accommodation in a form that is compatible with the surrounding area.

## **Safeguarding and Management**

The previous reason for refusal stated:

*“The proposed use as a C2 residential institution, by reason of safeguarding issues identified in the immediate vicinity of the site, represents a significant risk to the safety of vulnerable residents from crime and disorder resulting in a conflict with existing uses/circumstances. To permit the development would be contrary to Policy LP1 of the Kirklees Local Plan with respect to the potential for significant adverse impacts on the future occupants of the property, chapter 8, paragraph 92 together with chapter 12, paragraph 130(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework.”*

This application addresses that concern directly.

First, the management of the home would be proactive and intensive. Children would be supported on a 1:1 basis where required, with increased staffing levels during periods of transition or settling-in. This is an important safeguard and demonstrates that the home would not operate on a passive basis. It would instead provide active supervision tailored to the needs and vulnerabilities of individual children.

Second, children would not be expected to navigate local facilities independently where doing so would be inappropriate. School drop-offs, collections and journeys to activities would be managed by staff. Trips to Greenhead Park or other recreational destinations would also be supervised. This directly responds to the concern that the proximity of the park or surrounding area could give rise to unmanaged safeguarding risks.

Third, the operator has confirmed that all staff would be fully qualified and the home would be run in accordance with a clear safeguarding-led operational model. The accompanying management plan will set out the procedures for supervision, staffing, risk assessment, behaviour support, liaison with external agencies, and protocols for community interaction. It will directly address the concerns raised by the police in relation to vulnerable children and the local context.

Fourth, and importantly, the home would accommodate children from within the Kirklees area only, in partnership with Kirklees Children’s Services. This localised placement model is a substantial improvement over a more general placement approach because it reduces the risk of children being uprooted to an unfamiliar location and lessens the possibility of absconding linked to distance from known networks or home areas. It also supports more effective multi-agency working and continuity of care.

Taken together, these measures materially alter the planning balance. The concern previously identified was not that any children’s home at this site would inevitably give rise to harm, but that the particular safeguarding risk had not been sufficiently addressed. The revised

submission now provides a clear and credible strategy to manage those risks. Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions securing adherence to the management plan and limiting the use to a children's home for up to two children from the Kirklees area, there is no sound basis to conclude that the proposal would result in significant adverse impacts on future occupants.

The development should therefore be regarded as consistent with Policy LP1 and with the aims of the NPPF in promoting safe and inclusive communities.

### **Character, Design and Heritage**

No substantial external changes are proposed to facilitate the use. The building would remain in residential use in visual terms and would continue to read as a detached bungalow within a domestic plot. The comings and goings associated with a home for up to two children, albeit supported by staff, would remain modest and would not alter the essential character of the site or surroundings.

Given the absence of significant physical change, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Greenhead Conservation Area. Likewise, it would preserve the setting of the former Wentworth School and Greenhead Park. The significance of these designated heritage assets arises primarily from their architectural, historic and townscape qualities, and the proposal would not result in physical encroachment, visual harm or erosion of that significance.

The development is therefore consistent with Policies LP2 and LP24 and with national policy relating to good design and the conservation of heritage assets.

### **Residential Amenity**

The proposed use is small in scale and domestic in nature. It would be occupied by no more than two children and managed in a manner akin to a family household with support staff. The previous refusal did not identify any unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenity, and there is no evidence that the proposal would give rise to undue noise, disturbance, overlooking or activity beyond that which could reasonably be expected from residential occupation of the property.

The property has an enclosed rear garden and sufficient internal space to support an appropriate living environment for future residents. Staff supervision and structured management would further assist in ensuring that the use operates in a quiet and orderly manner. The proposal is therefore acceptable in amenity terms.

## **Highways and Parking**

The site benefits from a large driveway and detached garage, providing ample off-street parking and turning space for staff and visitors. The use would generate limited traffic movements, particularly given the small number of children accommodated and the managed nature of journeys to school and activities.

As with amenity, the earlier refusal did not identify any unacceptable highway or parking impacts. There is no reason to conclude that the proposal would prejudice highway safety or result in parking stress. The proposal is therefore consistent with Policy LP22.

## **Heritage**

The application site lies within the Greenhead Conservation Area and within the setting of the former Wentworth School, a Grade II listed building, and Greenhead Park, a Grade II registered park and garden. These heritage assets form an important part of the wider character of the area and are therefore material to the assessment of the proposal.

The site itself is an existing detached bungalow occupying a corner plot within an established residential setting. The proposal does not involve any external alterations to the building, nor any change to the appearance of the site. The development relates primarily to the change of use of the property from a dwellinghouse to a children's home for up to two children. As such, the proposal would not materially alter the building's form, scale, massing, architectural appearance or visual relationship with the surrounding area.

The significance of the Greenhead Conservation Area derives from its established townscape character, its historic pattern of development, its landscaped setting, and the contribution made by a range of buildings and open spaces, including the nearby parkland and historic institutional buildings. Likewise, the significance of the former Wentworth School and Greenhead Park is principally experienced through their architectural and historic interest, their landscape setting, and their contribution to the wider heritage value of the locality.

In this case, the proposed use would remain domestic in appearance and character. There would be no prominent built additions, no harmful changes to boundary treatments, and no urbanising works that would detract from the established visual qualities of the site or its surroundings. The property would continue to read as a residential building within a residential plot, and the use would not erode the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Similarly, the proposal would preserve the setting of the Grade II listed former Wentworth School and Greenhead Park. There would be no physical encroachment into these assets, no interruption of important views, and no changes that would diminish appreciation of their significance. The development is modest in scale and entirely compatible with the prevailing residential context.

Overall, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Greenhead Conservation Area and preserve the setting of the nearby designated heritage assets. It therefore accords with the statutory duty under sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as the relevant heritage and design objectives of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Conclusion

This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of 1a Park Drive South from a dwellinghouse to a children's home for up to two children. The proposal would provide a small-scale, well-managed care setting within an existing residential property in a sustainable location.

The previous refusal was narrow in scope and related specifically to safeguarding concerns in the immediate vicinity of the site. Importantly, the refusal did not establish any objection in principle to the use of the property as a children's home, nor did it identify unacceptable impacts in terms of residential amenity, parking, design, or heritage. The current application responds directly to that reason for refusal through a strengthened and clearly defined management approach.

Since the refusal, the applicant has engaged with Kirklees Children's Services and it has been agreed that the home will operate in partnership with them, with placements limited to children from within the Kirklees area. This is a significant improvement in planning terms, as it reduces the likelihood of children being placed away from their local support networks and correspondingly reduces the risk of children running away. The accompanying management plan also directly addresses the concerns previously raised by West Yorkshire Police, including supervision levels, escorted activities, school and activity transport arrangements, staffing, and safeguarding procedures tailored to the site and its surroundings.

The proposal would remain residential and domestic in character. It would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring occupiers or highway safety, and the property is well suited to the proposed use given its size, enclosed garden, and ample off-street parking. In heritage terms, the development would preserve the character and appearance of the Greenhead Conservation Area and preserve the setting of the former Wentworth School and Greenhead Park, as no substantial external alterations or harmful visual changes are proposed.

Taken as a whole, the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable re-use of an existing dwelling to meet an identified care need in a form that is low-key, policy-compliant, and capable of being safely managed. The application addresses the sole reason for refusal in a direct and robust manner and should now be viewed favourably against the relevant provisions of the Kirklees Local Plan, the Kirklees Planning Guidance for Children's Homes 2025, and the National Planning Policy Framework.



Planning permission should therefore be granted.