



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 November 2025

by R Bartlett PGDip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3372918

11 Turnberry Lane, Northampton, NN4 0PA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Critchlow of GAC Family Services against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref is 2025/1729/FULL.
- The development proposed is change of use from dwelling (C3) to children's home (C2).

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use from dwelling (C3) to children's home (C2) at 11 Turnberry Lane, Northampton, NN4 0PA, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2025/1729/FULL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted drawings: 1:1250 location plan, 1:500 block plan identifying parking spaces, and NTP/2025/032/001 floor plans.
 - 3) The property shall be used only as a children's home, to be occupied by a maximum of five children at a time and their carers, and for no other use falling within class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 or any amendment to it. The property may revert back to a C3 dwelling without the need for planning permission.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed use on i) the living conditions of occupiers of nearby dwellings; and ii) on street parking and highway safety.

Reasons

Living conditions

3. The appeal property is situated within a modern residential estate. It is proposed to change the use of the existing five-bedroom detached family home to a children's home for up to five children. In addition to the children living in the home, there would be two non-resident support workers and a manager at the property during the day, and two non-resident support workers present overnight. A further on-call support worker would be stationed off site and would visit the property as and when necessary.

4. In a five-bed family home, one of the bedrooms would ordinarily be occupied by parents or guardians, and some siblings may share a bedroom. The children and adults occupying a family home, together with their visitors and daily activities, would generally remain much the same over long periods of time. As such, neighbours would benefit from a degree of familiarity and regularity related to the use of the property.
5. The staff and children residing and working in a children's home would generally be unrelated and would stay for varying periods of time, with changes therefore likely to occur more frequently, along with changes to the ages and requirements of each child. Activity could therefore vary overtime depending upon the needs of the different children living in the home. In this respect the number of comings and goings generated could reasonably be expected to be greater than those generated by a family home. However, these comings and goings would remain domestic in nature and would be predominantly during the daytime and at sociable hours. I see no reason why children playing in the garden or being told off by carers would generate any greater noise than that created by children, siblings and responsible adults occupying a single-family home.
6. There are generous gaps and large garages between the slightly staggered and angled properties in this area. The appeal property is set well back from the road and faces garages and parking areas directly opposite it. There are no dwellings directly behind it, only a public park and golf course, with a footpath running along the rear boundaries of adjacent properties. The large garages to the front of Nos. 9 and 11 would significantly mitigate the effect of any comings and goings to the front of No.11. The closest part of No. 15 comprises a driveway and double garage, with a room above, separated by mature planting. Rear gardens are also enclosed by fences and mature hedges.
7. The occupancy of this large dwelling by up to five children, cared for by two or three adults at a time, would not be overly intensive. Whilst no internal alterations are shown on the proposed floor plans, and these would not require planning permission anyway, it appears that the layout of the property could easily be improved to provide five similar sized bedrooms and 5 bathrooms at first floor level, in addition to the ground floor WC, kitchen and extensive shared living space. The large garden, garage and rear outbuildings also provide additional incidental living and leisure space, plus storage.
8. I therefore conclude that having regard to the generous size of the home, its garden, the space around it, its garage and parking space, and its separation from neighbouring properties, the modest increase in activity generated by the homing of up to five children with non-resident carers and visitors, would not result in harm to the living conditions of occupiers of other dwellings nearby.
9. The proposal would accord with paragraphs 135 and 198 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which seek to ensure new development is appropriate having regard to living conditions and quality of life. I do not consider policies Q1 or Q2 of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 2011-2029 (the LPP2), which relate to placemaking and design, and the amenity and layout of new homes, to be directly relevant to the proposal, and as such I find no conflict with these. I also find no conflict with policies H1 or H5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (the WNJCS), which relate to the mix and

density of new housing developments, and seek to retain existing dwellings for residential use.

Parking and highway safety

10. Turnberry Lane is a long residential cul-de-sac, with a wide carriageway and footpaths on either side. Houses along this road are all detached and have garages and off-road parking for multiple vehicles. Traffic is not busy or fast moving, and unrestricted on street parking is available without obstructing footpaths, driveways or the safe use of the road.
11. The appeal property benefits from a detached triple garage together with off-street parking and turning to the front. Four cars can be parked on the front driveway, without using the garages, tandem parking or blocking any vehicles in. As the residents would be children under the age of 18, it is highly unlikely that they would have a car.
12. Even if all staff travelled to work by car, which may not necessarily always be the case, the four off-street parking spaces available would be sufficient for the three staff generally present at one time and a visitor. Whilst there may need to be some moving of vehicles to facilitate shift changes at 8am and 8pm, this would not cause disruption or danger to other users of the public highway. Visits by other professionals would be less frequent and would often be planned and expected. Regular staff and visitors would be aware of each other's shift patterns and where to park at different times. Visitors such as social workers arriving by car would be able to park on the driveway or on the street nearby without causing obstruction.
13. Any other associated vehicular movements such as supermarket deliveries would be unlikely to be more than once per week, with the delivery vehicle parking on the road for a short period of time, which would be no different to such deliveries to a family home. School transport, if required, would only be present for short periods of time to pick up or drop off children.
14. I therefore conclude that the modest increase in parking and traffic generated by the use would not be detrimental to highway safety. As such, the proposal would accord with policy MO2 of the LPP2, which seeks to ensure development would not result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety. As I have not been provided with a copy of the parking standards supplementary planning document (SPD) referred to in policy MO4 of the LPP2, I have been unable to assess the proposal against this. However, for the reasons already given I am satisfied that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of parking and highway safety. I also note that no objections have been raised by the local highway authority. Paragraph 116 of the Framework confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Other Matters

15. Planning concerns land use, and a C2 use is residential. The value of properties in the area, the use of public funding, and the presence of restrictive covenants, are not relevant to my consideration of the planning merits of the case.
16. The location of the site in an existing built-up residential area suggests that schools will be available close by or that there will be existing transport to local schools and colleges, as well as access to other services and facilities. There is no

reason why these children would be any more likely to have special needs or require access to a special school or other specialist services than children in family homes.

17. As the dwelling is existing, concerns relating to flood risk and golf balls from the adjacent golf course are not relevant as these pose no greater risk to the home or its occupants than they do to a family home or neighbouring residential properties. The flood risk vulnerability is the same for both C2 and C3 dwellings and the flood risk sequential and exception tests do not apply to this change of use in flood zone 2. Waste and recycling disposal would be no different to that of a family home.
18. The dwelling and its residential use would not be lost, and it could revert back to a C3 family home at anytime without the need for planning permission. As the proposal does not relate to a secure residential institution for young offenders, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is unjustified, and the Ofsted reports I have been referred to do not alter my view on this matter. The area, which is described by locals as being a safe, peaceful, residential area, no doubt meets the objectives of ensuring such homes support the safety and well-being of the children living in them. My attention has been drawn to the fact that planning permission has been granted for a children's home nearby on Colonial Drive. I have not been advised whether that permission has been implemented or that it has resulted in any problems. Nor have I been made aware that there are a significant number of children's homes in this area and as such the proposal would not undermine any aims to create or protect balanced communities.
19. I have been referred to numerous appeal decisions relating to children's homes elsewhere. However, I do not have the full details of these cases, each of which will relate to different numbers of staff and children, different property types, sizes, and locations, with different relationships to neighbours and with different on and off-street parking availability. I have determined the case before me based upon its own merits and as such this decision would not set a precedent.
20. Whilst additional information regarding the management and operation of the proposed children's home would have been helpful in alleviating some concerns of local residents and supporting the appellant's case, I acknowledge that other regimes are in place to address such matters. I also acknowledge that practices may vary over time to reflect the ages and needs of different children occupying the home.

Conditions

21. In addition to the standard time limit and list of approved drawings, a condition to limit the C2 use to a children's home only, and to limit the maximum number of children occupying the home at one time, is reasonable and necessary to ensure that the comings and goings and parking demands remain commensurate with the size of the property and other large family homes in the immediate area. The council has suggested a condition that would restrict the ages of children occupying the home to those between 8 and 17 but have given no reasons for this. In the absence of any planning reasons as to why such a restriction should be applied to the occupancy of this home, which is surrounded by other large family homes in a residential area, it would fail to meet the relevant legal and policy tests for planning conditions.

Conclusion

22. The proposal would accord with the development plan and there are no material considerations that indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with this. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

R Bartlett

INSPECTOR