



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2025

by **M Tandy C.WEM MCIWEM MIoL**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/W/25/3371127

Rowan House Back Street, Harpley, Norfolk PE31 6TU

- 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 Juventas Services against the decision of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00611/CU.
 - The development proposed is change of use of an existing dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential care home (Use Class C2) to care for up to four children between the ages of 8-18.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use of an existing dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a residential care home (Use Class C2) to care for up to four children between the ages of 8-18 at Rowan House Back Street, Norfolk, PE31 6TU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00611/CU, and the plans submitted with it, 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 Location Plan dated 02-04-2025 [PP-13907837v1].
 - 3) The premises shall be used solely as a residential care home within Use Class C2 for the accommodation and care of no more than four children aged between 8 and 18 years, and for no other purpose (including any other purpose within Class C2 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or any statutory re-enactment thereof).

Preliminary Matters

2. I am satisfied appropriate notification of the appeal against the decision to refuse planning permission for the development described above has been undertaken.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the appeal site would be an appropriate location for the proposed development to access community facilities and public transport; and
 - the effect of the proposal on highway safety, with particular regard to the provision of parking and safe site access.

Reasons

Location

4. The appeal site is located in Harpley, which predominantly comprises residential dwellings, agricultural development and amenities typical of a rural village for this area of Norfolk. The village benefits from a daily bus service and the nearby A148 connects Harpley to neighbouring settlements including King's Lynn and Fakenham. Harpley is identified in the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy of LP01 of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 2021-2040 (the Local Plan).
5. The proposed use of the appeal site is considered similar to that of the existing residential dwelling and would therefore integrate with the surrounding development. Local community services including a church, village hall and primary school are a short distance from the appeal site and accessible by foot. Future users would also benefit from Harpley's transport connectivity for travelling to and from the appeal site and accessing other facilities more commonly found in larger settlements, such as medical and retail services. Whilst the public transport provision in Harpley may be infrequent, the needs and mobility of future residents may require transportation by car, and the appeal site can conveniently access the A148 directly from Back Street. Furthermore, whilst there may be fewer opportunities to access community led activities and social groups in a rural location compared with an urban location, this does not exclude children with additional care needs living in villages such as Harpley.
6. As a consequence of the above, I conclude that the location is not isolated nor inappropriate in terms of access to community facilities and public transport. The proposed development would therefore not conflict with Policies LP01, LP06, LP13, LP18, LP21 and LP29 of the Local Plan with regards to appropriate location. Collectively these seek to appropriately locate development with consideration of climate change and use of sustainable transport, and support grouped specialist care accommodation close to medical services, and retail, public and community facilities, as appropriate to the needs and mobility of future occupiers.

Highway safety

7. The appeal site comprises a detached two-storey residential dwelling with a large sweeping gravel driveway offering off-street parking and access to a garage and private rear garden. The driveway entrance is directly from Back Street which is a single carriageway, generally flanked with brick and flint walls or vegetation that demarks neighbouring property boundaries.
8. The proposed development would require parking for care staff and visitors with seven available spaces identified on the submitted 'Parking Layout Plan'. It was evident from the site visit that the large driveway could accommodate several vehicles to avoid off-site parking, however the proposed layout may lead to some practical difficulties for turning during peak use. For example, during staff shift changes where six members of staff could be on site concurrently. However, with reasonable site management I consider the practicalities of vehicle turning are surmountable to avoid future users reversing on to the highway and visitor parking facilitated by prior arrangement.
9. The proposed development would not increase the number of vehicle movements above that expected of the existing five bedroom family dwelling, nor introduce a

new access onto Back Street. During the site visit I observed partially obscured visibility splays from the appeal site access only due to overgrown vegetation, and it was evident that sections of open verge provided adequate passing places to facilitate large transport and agricultural vehicles travelling along Back Street and the surrounding roads. The absence of footways and street lighting is not uncommon in rural villages and the speed limits in Harpley are generally low. Furthermore, pedestrians could utilise numerous verges to step off the carriageway when necessary. The highway authority has not raised concerns regarding the above issues and having visited the site, I see no reason to disagree.

10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not result in an increased risk to highway safety, with particular regard to parking provision and safe site access. The proposed development would therefore not conflict with Policies LP14 and LP21 of the Local Plan, in relation to ensuring adequate parking provision and safe site access.

Other Matters

11. Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council and third parties, including in relation to air, noise and water pollution, waste collection, the demographic of neighbouring occupiers, a nearby unfenced pond, and provision of emergency services in Harpley. However, the Council has not advocated these concerns and based on the information before me, none of these matters would be grounds to dismiss the appeal.
12. Considering the nature and context of the proposed change of use, I find there would be no harm to the Grade II listed building which neighbours the appeal site and that its setting would be preserved. The proposed development would therefore not conflict with Policy LP20 of the Local Plan which ensures protection of the historic environment.
13. The site is located within or close to the zones of influence of The Roydon Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Ramsar Site, and The Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Secretary of State has considered the application in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (Si 571/2017) and directed the proposed development is not Environmental Impact Assessment development.

Conditions

14. The Council has provided a list of suggested planning conditions, which I have considered against paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance. I have amended and simplified the wording for several of the conditions in the interests of effectiveness and precision.
15. To meet legislative requirements, a condition shall be imposed to address the period for commencement. I shall also impose conditions for the following reasons. A condition specifying the relevant drawing is imposed as this provides certainty. A condition to ensure the use of the premises remains suitable for its location and compatible with the character of the area.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would comply with the Development Plan when it is considered as a whole. The appeal should be allowed.

M Tandy

INSPECTOR