

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

**THE GRANGE
OAKAMoor ROAD, CHEADLE**

MARCH 2024

Site Address:

The Grange, Oakamoor Road, Cheadle, Staffordshire, ST10 4QR

Applicant:

Acheron Care Limited

Proposal:

Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to
children's care home (Use Class C2)

Planning & Heritage Statement:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Acheron Care Limited to seek full planning permission for the change of use of an existing detached dwellinghouse at The Grange, Oakamoor Road, Cheadle from its existing use as a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a care home for children (Use Class C2).
- 1.2 Acheron Care Limited is an organisation founded and registered for the purpose of providing bespoke packages of residential therapeutic care for children and young people aged from 0-18 in the care of the Local Authority. The proposed care home will provide care, accommodation, and therapy for up to three young people, with the applicant specialising in providing care for children with trauma history backgrounds. The home will be registered with Ofsted with the children having access to a clinical psychologist as part of its operation.
- 1.3 There will be up to 3 members of full-time staff on duty at any one time, with an additional two managers present at varying hours during the daytime. Staff will work on a rota basis, typically involving two days on and four days off, with two members of staff staying overnight in a sleep-in capacity. Of the four existing bedrooms within the property, three will be for the children to use, each having their own room, the fourth being occupied by staff members. The home will operate as any other family home, with the young people attending school or college as any other child would. There will be no medical appointments taking place on the site.
- 1.4 No internal or external alterations to the existing dwellinghouse are proposed as part of the submitted proposal, nor will there be any changes to the existing site layout and parking arrangements.

2 Site Description

- 2.1 The application site lies within the rural area and comprises a detached two storey dwellinghouse known as The Grange. The property is Grade II Listed and is located on the southern side of the Oakamoor Road, approximately 1.2km from Cheadle.
- 2.2 The building is constructed from red/orange facing brickwork and has a steeply pitched Staffordshire Blue tiled roof atop. Its principal elevation faces to the south, looking out over an extensive area of established hardstanding. A large area of residential amenity space extends to the east of the site. Vehicular access to the site is taken direct off the Oakamoor Road to the immediate east of the dwellinghouse, with parking for 6+ vehicles available.
- 2.3 The existing dwelling has previously been used as a care home, having been approved for such purposes under application SMD/2008/1202. It was subsequently granted consent to revert back to a dwellinghouse under application SMD/2010/0063. Its current use remains that of a dwellinghouse.
- 2.4 To the immediate west of the site lies an 'L' shaped former agricultural building that has been converted into a dwellinghouse under application SMD/1980/0358 (The Barn). That dwelling is served by a winding vehicular access track that runs to the south of the application site, before turning northwards to run alongside the eastern site boundary.
- 2.5 A further dwellinghouse lies 83m to the southwest (Lower Grange Farm), with another dwelling located 88 metres to the east further along Oakamoor Road (High View House). The carriageway of the Oakamoor Road encloses the northern site boundary with open fields extending beyond that. The site frontage is enclosed by a mixture of high boundary walls and mature hedgerows which give the site a good degree of natural enclosure.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community; increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce
- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment

- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations
- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. This will be achieved through a number of actions, including:

- Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H1
- Giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape

3.4 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that new housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in Policy H3,

and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies. It goes on to state that the housing for special groups, particularly for older people and others as identified in the SHMA or successor document should be of a scale and in a location which is appropriate to its needs. Policy H1 also allows for:

- The conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; or such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of the heritage asset.

3.5 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to ‘Design Considerations’ and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council’s Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance
- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight,

visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution

- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use
- ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community

3.6 Policy DC2 of the Local Plan relates to 'The Historic Environment' and states that:

1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.
3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.
4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.

5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.
 6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.
- 3.7 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved (amongst other requirements) by:
- Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.
 - Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development, and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, aimed at ensuring that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed, as well as securing high quality design, safeguarding highway safety and preserving heritage assets. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Local Plan Car Parking Standards

- 4.2 The adopted parking standards for a C2 use require that one parking space be provided per resident staff member, plus 1 space per non-resident present at peak working times. In addition, there should be one space per 3 bed spaces for visitors. An ambulance space should also be provided in a position which would not impede site access but located as close as possible to the main entrance of the establishment.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application proposes the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a children's care home (Use Class C2). Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that to provide the services that the community needs, planning decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- 5.2 The above guidance is enshrined within policies SS1, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan which support the delivery of new housing to meet the needs of special groups, which includes children's care homes, and which also allows for the conversion of existing rural buildings for residential purposes where the building is worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion.
- 5.3 The proposed change of use of the existing dwelling to a care home for children will meet a pressing need within the wider Staffordshire area for such facilities. Children get placed in residential care for a variety of reasons. It could be a short term placement to work with the child therapeutically in attempts to either place them back into foster care or back with their families. Alternatively residential care might be better suited for a young person long term until adulthood due to the young person having emotional and behavioural difficulties, which require support from a larger staff team or more specialist skills. In some cases, residential care may be a preferred placement choice for a young person who does not want to live in a family environment as this can be a trigger point.
- 5.4 In England, just under 400,000 children (3% of the child population) are in the social care system at any one time, and more than 80,000 of these children are

children in care (GOV.UK, 2022). This number is on track to hit almost 100,000 by 2025 – an increase of more than a third within just one decade. New research from the County Councils Network (CCN) shows that based on the average increase rates for the past four years, the total will reach 95,000 by the middle of the decade, up from 69,000 in 2015. Some 63% of looked after children were looked after due to abuse or neglect in 2018/19 (NSPCC, 2021).

- 5.5 This continuing increase in children requiring full time care means there is a growing demand for more children's care homes to support and protect these children in need. Staffordshire County Council itself acknowledges that there is a shortage of quality care places for children, noting that it has got to the stage where Councils can be competing against one another to use the most suitable accommodation, which can result in children being placed many miles from Staffordshire.
- 5.6 Acheron Care Limited is a registered care provider who provide tailored support to the children they care for. They aim to provide a home for young people who may have experienced trauma within their lives and provide an outstanding quality of care and accommodation along with therapeutic input so that these young people who have likely been harmed previously, are able to regain trust in adults and progress to become positive functioning members of society.
- 5.7 The applicant's therapeutic ethos means that all staff are trained in Empathic behavior management under the PACE model, (Playfulness, Accepting, Curiosity and Empathy) and consequently the therapeutic feel to the home will be there twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The company aims to provide a home from home for young people where they can truly flourish.

- 5.8 The proposed change of use to provide a children's care home on this site is wholly consistent with the objectives of policies SS1, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan which seeks to ensure that development contributes positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands, and will make a valuable contribution towards meeting the demand for such care within the Staffordshire Moorlands wider North Staffordshire area.
- 5.9 The proposal is also consistent with the specific provisions of policy H1 of the Local Plan that support the conversion of existing rural buildings where they are suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion, comprising as it does a high quality, vernacular building that benefits from Grade II Listed status. The principle of development is consequently acceptable.

Design & Layout

- 5.10 The proposed development does not require, nor propose any internal or external changes to the existing building, nor to its external surroundings. The building and site will consequently remain unaltered from its existing appearance. The proposed development will therefore not give rise to any harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.11 There are a handful of neighbouring properties within the vicinity of the site, the closest being The Barn which lies to the immediate west of the site. The other neighbouring properties lie more distant (80+ metres). The proposed change of use of the premises to a children's care home will not derive any materially greater harm to neighbouring residential amenity than that which would otherwise be expected of a four bedroomed dwellinghouse. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Heritage Impact

- 5.12 Policy DC2 of the Local Plan states that the Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
- 5.13 These provisions are reinforced by the National Planning Policy Framework which states in paragraph 203 that in determining planning applications, Local Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, and the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.
- 5.14 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF goes on to state that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.15 The existing property comprises a Grade II Listed Building. The list description of the property describes the building as follows:

“Farmhouse. C17 core, refaced C18 and altered 1873. Red brick; tiled roofs; end stack to right. L-shaped plan. Two-storey front of two windows; three-light casements with gauged brick segmental heads; widely projecting wing to left on C17 chamfered stone plinth; set back to right with band at first floor level; catslide pent

roof set against return angle with eaves set over wedged head of entrance inscribed "CH/1873". Overlight and C20 panelled door. Interior has chamfered beams in rooms on road side".

- 5.16 In this particular case the proposal will not have *any impact* on the setting, historic fabric or significance of the Listed Building as a heritage asset. No internal works are proposed, nor required, nor are any changes to the external appearance of the building proposed or required. Similarly, the grounds surrounding the building will also be unchanged, with the parking of vehicles associated with the care home taking place on the existing area of hardstanding to the south of the building, as per its use by the existing dwellinghouse.
- 5.17 The proposed development will therefore not result in any loss of significance to the existing heritage asset and as a consequence the proposal is held to meet the requirements of policy DC2 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highway Safety

- 5.18 The application site benefits from an established vehicular access off the Oakamoor Road which serves an extensive area of hardstanding that lies to the south of the existing dwellinghouse. That area of hardstanding provides space for the parking of at least 6 cars.
- 5.19 The access affords good visibility on egress onto the Oakamoor Road and its repurposing to serve the children's care home will not result in any material intensification in use compared to that of the existing four-bedroomed dwellinghouse.

- 5.20 The Local Authority's adopted car parking standards dictate that there should be one parking space provided per resident staff member, plus 1 space per non-resident present at peak working times. In addition, there should be one space per 3 bed spaces for visitors. On top of that is a requirement to accommodate space for the parking of an ambulance.
- 5.21 The proposed development will have up to three members of permanent staff present on site during the day, normally reducing to two at night, along with a manager and deputy manager who will attend the site at varying times during the day time. The property will provide three bedrooms for children. Such factors equate to a total parking demand of 6 spaces plus one ambulance space.
- 5.22 The ambulance space is unnecessary in this particular care as this is not the type of care home where regular attendance by an ambulance is expected nor required. The existing area of hardstanding to the south of the dwelling has ample space to accommodate the required level of parking along with associated manoeuvring space so that vehicles may exit the site in a forward gear.
- 5.23 The site also occupies an appropriate location that balances the needs of the occupiers of the property, with the desire to secure sustainable development. The site lies approximately 1.5 miles from the centre of Cheadle where a full range of day-to-day services is on offer. The site is also ideally placed to facilitate access to numerous local schools and having those educational opportunities available will provide the young people with the best chance to attain a good education and support themselves throughout their lives. The proposed development is therefore consistent with the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Having regard to the considerations set out above, it is submitted that the proposed change of use of the existing dwellinghouse to a care home is acceptable in principle and will not give rise to any harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, nor to neighbouring residential amenity. The proposal will furthermore safeguarding the significance of the existing listed building as a heritage asset and will not give rise to any adverse harm to highway safety within the locality.
- 6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, H1, DC1, DC2 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.