

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION No:	DM/17/00384/FPA
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Change of use from former nursing home into a new 25 bed hotel (C1 Use Class)
NAME OF APPLICANT:	All Saints Living Stanfield House
ADDRESS:	Joicey Square Stanley DH9 0PG
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Tanfield Steve France
CASE OFFICER:	Senior Planning Officer Telephone: 03000 264871 steve.france@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

The Site

1. The application site consists of 0.29ha of land at Stanfield House, the former Residential Care Home at Joicey Square, a large one and two storey brick built building of institutional appearance. The vacant building is set within restricted grounds, with vehicular parking and service access from the rear. Although vacant, the building has been subject to ongoing refurbishment works, internal and external for over a year to facilitate a range of uses, although these physical changes have not resulted in the building being brought into any of the approved uses.
2. The site is demarked on three sides by low level walls and open mesh fencing, with the side of a small commercial garage on the fourth. The front elevation of the building faces across roadways and open grass verges to Joicey Gardens, the site being clearly visible from one of the two large roundabouts that take the A693 in dual carriageway form through Stanley. Joicey Gardens is a development of semi-detached and mid-linked older persons bungalows which wrap around three sides of the former nursing home, the different forms of development originally designed to offer a range of complimentary accommodation for a community of older residents. The remainder of the boundaries are shared by a small commercial garage, and a vehicular service yard serving that business and the Cooperative Funeral Services building that fronts the roundabout.
3. The site is adjacent the centre of the settlement, well served by, and with easy access to goods, services and sustainable transport opportunities of Stanley.

The Proposal

4. The application proposes a Change of use from former nursing home (as none of the intervening approvals have been implemented) into a new 25 bed hotel (C1 Use Class). The main access into the building will be moved along the front elevation. Parking for up to 15 cars is shown provided – 10 from the front of the site for customers, 5 for staff parking accessed from the rear using the existing service yard.
5. The application is presented to Committee as a major application.

PLANNING HISTORY

6. The current application follows a Committee approval for conversion of former care home to 14 residential single bed flats, 3 training rooms, 15 office suites and café in 2016.
7. In 2013 an application for the conversion of the redundant nursing home to 14 residential apartments was approved by Committee.
8. A number of applications were withdrawn or returned in between the two approvals.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY

9. The Government has consolidated all planning policy statements, guidance notes and many circulars into a single policy statement, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), although the majority of supporting Annexes to the planning policy statements are retained. The overriding message is that new development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay. It defines the role of planning in achieving sustainable development under three topic headings – economic, social and environmental, each mutually dependant.
10. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF requires local planning authorities to approach development management decisions positively, utilising twelve 'core planning principles'.
11. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the weight to be attached to relevant saved local plan policy will depend upon the degree of consistency with the NPPF. The greater the consistency, the greater the weight. The relevance of this issue is discussed, where appropriate, in the assessment section of the report below.
12. The following elements of the NPPF are considered relevant to this proposal;
13. *NPPF Part 1 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy* – reinforces the Government's commitment to securing economic growth to create jobs and prosperity, ensuring the planning system supports this aim – 'significant weight' is to be placed on this aim. Planning policies should seek to address potential barriers to investment, setting out clear economic vision and strategy which proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, identifies sites and inward investment,

and identifies priority areas for economic regeneration. There is no specific advice on decision making.

14. *NPPF Part 4 – Promoting Sustainable Transport*. Notes the importance of transport policies in facilitating sustainable development and contributing to wider sustainability and health issues. Local parking standards should take account of the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of public transport, levels of local car ownership and the need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

15. *NPPF Part 7 – Requiring Good Design*. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, with good design a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning.

16. *NPPF Part 8 – Promoting Healthy Communities* – the planning system is considered to have an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities, delivering social recreational and cultural facilities and services to meet community needs.

NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE:

17. The newly introduced National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) both supports the core government guidance set out in the NPPF, and represents detailed advice, both technical and procedural, having material weight in its own right. The advice is set out in a number of topic headings and is subject to change to reflect the up to date advice of Ministers and Government.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

18. The following are those saved policies in the Derwentside District Local Plan relevant to the consideration of this application:

19. *Policy GDP1 – General Development Principles* – is an overarching policy which aims to ensure that all developments incorporate a high standard of design, conserve energy and are energy efficient, protect the existing landscape and natural and historic features, protect and manage the ecology of the area, protect valuable open land, provide adequate landscaping, incorporate crime prevention measures and improve personal safety, protect amenity, provide adequate drainage, protect flood risk areas and protect the water resource from pollution.

20. *Policy TR2 – Development and Highway Safety* – relates to the provision of safe vehicular access/exit, adequate provision for service vehicle manoeuvring, access for emergency vehicles and access to the public transport network.

21. *Policy TR3 – Cycling* – requires the needs of cyclists to be taken into account, with convenient access for cyclists and cycle parking included within development schemes.

RELEVANT EMERGING POLICY:

22. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF says that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: the stage of the emerging plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and, the degree of consistency of the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF. The County Durham Plan was submitted for Examination in Public and a stage 1 Examination concluded. An Interim Report was issued by an Inspector dated 15 February 2015, however that report was quashed by the High Court following a

successful Judicial Review challenge by the Council. As part of the High Court Order, the Council has withdrawn the CDP from examination. In the light of this, policies of the CDP can no longer carry any weight at the present time.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at <http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/durham/text/00cont.htm>.

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

23. *Highways* – County Highways Engineers have no objections to the proposal, it meeting the required standards in their guidance.

24. *Northumbrian Water* – have no comments to make.

EXTERNAL CONSULTEES:

25. *Durham Police* – confirmed the crime risk for this development should be low providing there is adequate access control to prevent sneak in thefts.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

26. *Visit County Durham* – point out that the Stanley Destination Development Plan April 2015, identified the potential for developing an accommodation offer in the town. It concluded a need for an Inn with rooms offer and/or a small budget hotel and an urgent need for alternative uses for vacant buildings. Stanley has the advantage of two main pipelines that bring people within a few hundred yards of the town's main street. The coast to coast cycle route is half a mile to the west of the town. Hundreds of thousands of people cycle on parts of the route and around 15,000 complete the full C2C route annually. The A693 passes a hundred yards to the east along which approximately 12,000 vehicles travel each day or 5.7million vehicle journeys passing Stanley on the A693.

27. Further, the Durham Visitor Accommodation Study 2012 states that: Consett and Stanley will see some growth with town centre regeneration schemes and new housing developments. There could be potential in the longer term for budget hotel development here, most probably in Consett town centre.

28. In more general terms, the Durham Visitor Economic Impact Study 2015 - In 2015, the visitor economy in the Vale of Durham is valued at £329.06million from 9.1million visitors. 8% of the county's visitors stay overnight and their average spend per trip is £150.43.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

29. Surrounding neighbours have been consulted, a site notice was posted and a press notice was published in The Northern Echo. No objections or comments have been received.

The above is not intended to list every point made and represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file which can be viewed at <http://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

30. Having regard to the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the relevant Development Plan policies, relevant guidance and all other material planning considerations, including representations received, it is considered that the main planning issues in this instance relate to the principle of development, its relationship to neighbours, and highways access and servicing implications.

Principle of the Development

31. The proposed change of use will bring a prominent vacant building back into use in what is a prominent location surrounded by the sensitive land use of the surrounding older residents. There are no relevant Tourism policies in the Development Plan, with the matter of principle therefore assessed against the advice in the NPPF. Tourism is included in the list of appropriate 'Main town centre uses', with Local planning authorities encouraged to promote such to ensure the vitality of town centres.
32. The development is concluded acceptable in principle, with the assessment of the 'sustainability of the proposals and assessment of 'the planning balance' set out below.

Impact upon the Surrounding Area

33. The application proposes some detailed elevational changes in terms of elevational finishes and relocation of the main access, but otherwise the form and massing of the building is retained as is, ensuring no conflict with the relevant part of Policy GDP1.

Neighbouring Amenity

34. Stanfield House was designed as part of a community of older people's accommodation, and is surrounded by and overlooked by bungalows in that use. The applicant has sent evidence of their pre-application community engagement exercise, the community being well organised and having been pro-active in previous application's determination. Twenty three letters have been sent out to local residents, and no objections have been received. No new windows are proposed that would affect existing residential amenity, and for the most part the elevation facing existing residents is, and was mainly used for servicing or features secondary windows. There should be no effect on privacy giving Policy GDP1 compliance.
35. There is a potential for the use to affect residential amenity. The car park proposed and servicing are consistent in relationship to the dwellings with previous schemes approved by Committee. The applicant presents their scheme as a standard short stay hotel. To ensure the development would be used as intended, and give the surrounding residents the surety of the use they have sought, the applicant has confirmed no objection to a condition restricting the length of stays within the hotel. The Police have confirmed no objection to the proposed use.

Highway Safety

36. Highways Engineers have confirmed that the proposed parking provision meets County standards. A condition requiring the parking to be available for use before the hotel comes into use is proposed.

Other Issues

37. The proposals have economic sustainability benefits, with 12 full-time and 3 part-time jobs envisaged created. Further, the hotel gives an opportunity for business travellers to stay in the town, or for tourists to access the nearby attractions such as Beamish and the C2C.
38. A condition requiring provision of a cycling rack is proposed to meet the requirements of policy TR3, both for staff use and noting the opportunity for trade from the C2C. This is consistent with the previous approval.
39. A construction condition is proposed to protect the amenity of surrounding residents.

CONCLUSION

The Planning Balance and Conclusion

40. Stanfield House is in a highly sustainable location on the edge of the central business district of Stanley, which has a range of goods and services available, and excellent transport links. The application proposes to bring a prominent unused building back into a use that has the potential to economically benefit the town and surrounding area. The proposals are considered to benefit from the 'presumption in favour' of sustainable development. The issue of principle is supported by the NPPF, with detailed Policy considerations compliant with the Development Plan.
41. Subject to the aforementioned conditions designed to protect resident's amenity and ensure highway safety, the proposals are recommended approved.

RECOMMENDATION

42. That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans: 16038-EArch-FE-FF-DR-A-0121-P5 First Floor Plans, 16038-EArch-FE-GF-DR-A-0120-P5 Ground Floor Plans, 16038-EArch-FE-XX-DR-A-0130—Elevations, 16038-EArch-FE-SI-DR-A-0110-P3 Site Plan.
Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with Policies GDP1 and TR2 of the saved Policies in the Derwentside District Plan 1997.
 3. No rooms in the hotel hereby approved shall be occupied by a single person, couple or group of people for a continuous period of more than 8 weeks. The operator of the hotel must keep records of occupation of the rooms and must allow the Local Planning Authority inspection of such upon reasonable demand.

Reason: To protect surrounding residential amenity, define the extent of the approval and allow for monitoring of the operation.

4. The parking areas hereby approved, and as shown on plan 16038-EArch-FE-SI-DR-A-0110-P3, must be completed and available for use before the hotel is brought into commercial operation, and remain available at all times the hotel is in operation. In addition, a scheme of on-site cycle parking provision must be submitted to, approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in full before any part of the building is brought into use and thereafter retained and remain available at all times the hotel is in operation.

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with Policy TR2 of the saved Policies in the Derwentside District Plan 1997.

5. No construction operations, including the use of plant, equipment and deliveries, which are likely to give disturbance to local residents should take place before 0800hrs and continue after 1800hrs Monday to Friday, or commence before 0800hrs and continue after 1300hrs on Saturday. No works should be carried out on a Sunday or a Bank Holiday.

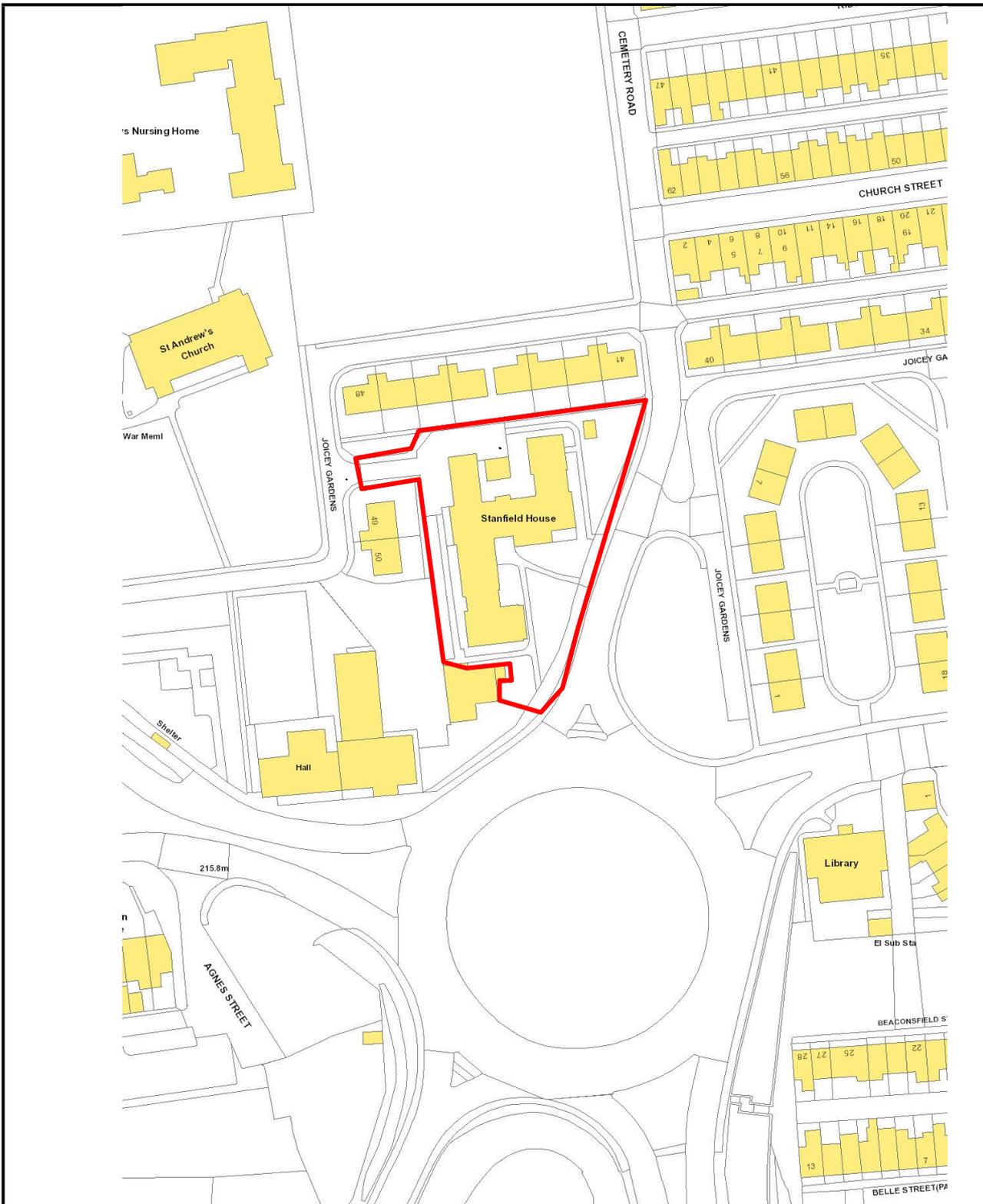
Reason: In order to protect the amenities of residents in and adjacent the development site as a requirement of Policy GDP1 of the Derwentside District Local Plan, 1997 (saved Policies 2009).

STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

The Local Planning Authority in arriving at its decision to approve the application has, without prejudice to a fair and objective assessment of the proposals, issues raised and representations received, sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner with the objective of delivering high quality sustainable development to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area in accordance with the NPPF. (Statement in accordance with Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Submitted application form, plans supporting documents
The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
National Planning Practice Guidance Notes
Derwentside District Local Plan 1997 (saved policies 2009)
Statutory, internal and public consultation responses



Planning Services

Stanfield House, Joicey Square, Stanley,
DH9 0PG

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Comments

Date 30th March 2017

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