



Studio
Charrette

**Planning application for Change of use of
existing dwelling into a Residential Family
Centre (RFC).**

Planning and Design and Access Statement.

14- 16 Inglewhite Road, Longridge ,Preston, PR3 2JS

Application Site

The application site is located at 14 - 16 Inglewhite Road Longridge Preston PR3 2JS. The application property is a mid-terrace property in the central location of the market town of Longridge. The property is currently separate from the adjoining property at number 14 but is in the same ownership. Of relevance here is that number 14 which is owned by our client's is in the same use as that now being proposed here and this application simply seeks to use this opportunity to connect the two properties together via an internal connecting door.

Number 14 has boundaries on Inglewhite Road and Crumpax Avenue. The property was built towards the end of the 19th century, when the area was subject to a boom in housing construction to accommodate employers of local mines and mills. It comprises two storeys including a rear yard area.

The property is constructed in solid stone – coursed stone to the west (Inglewhite road) and south (Crumpax Avenue), and random stone walling to the east (rear) elevation. Openings in the west and south elevations are formed using smooth cut (architectural) stone surrounds including decorative entrance portico to the south elevation door opening. The main house roof is of traditional hipped roof construction which discharges rainwater to parapet (secret) guttering formed by a continuous cut stone plinth. The roof is finished in natural slate. The rear external yard is fully hard surfaced and enclosed by a 1.8M high natural stone garden wall which forms the boundary to the south and east. Access to the yard can be gained off the pavement to the south, or via a track to the east (provides rear access to all houses on the terrace).

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

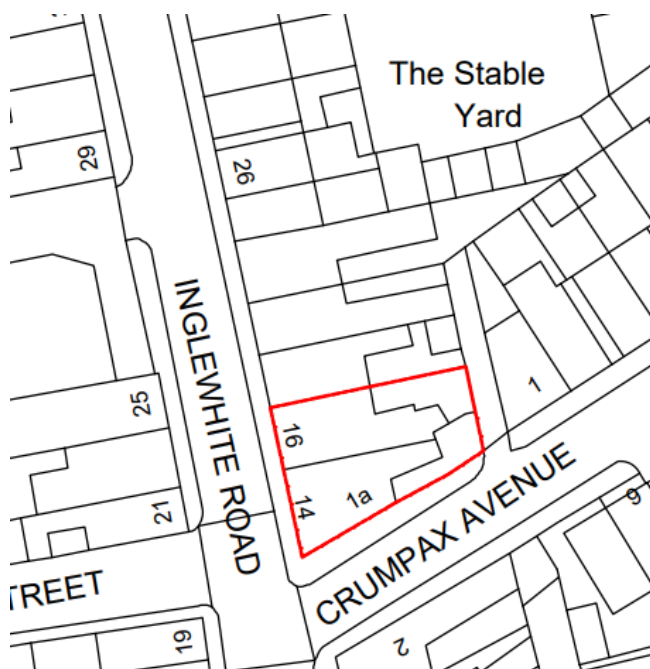


Fig 2 view of street scene:



The Application Proposals:

The application is essentially the same as that previously approved for our Clients at the property next door - to house young families for short to medium periods of time with occasional stay-overs, or can be described as a change use for a Residential Family Centre (RFC). Sisu Services (the Applicants) make this application to extend their RFC at 14 Inglewhite Road Longridge Preston PR3 into 16 Inglewhite Road 3JS. Essentially, we want to create an internal door from number 14 into number 16 to create a 5-bedroom property.

A placement in a RFC is one means by which children can remain within their parents care when Children's Services have identified a potential risk for the child that needs further assessment and/or support. Often there are family court proceedings in relation to the child involved when a parent assessment placement is being used by the Local Authority (LA). The placement will support the LA in managing the risk and assess parental ability to meet the needs of their child / children. These placements are used for babies and very young children (usually up to the age of 8 years) with either a single parent or two parents together and could be single or multiple children. Usually, it is a single parent with a newborn baby. The expected average stay is for 12 weeks so a comprehensive parenting assessment can be completed.

The setting is staffed on a 24/7 basis. Careful consideration has been given to staff rotas to prevent disruption to residents and to ensure access to public transport for staff. The proposed staffing rota and levels would be as follows:

1 manager
2 day staff
2 night staff

The total number would be 5 staff and it is not envisaged that this is likely to increase.

Staff would likely be from the immediate area. None of these roles are essential car user positions. Staff are encouraged to take public transport. The business would buy the staff team an annual car parking pass on the Barclay Rd car park. Head office in Longridge at 38 Berry Lane, PR3 3JJ and walking distance from the property – this would facilitate meetings, wider family visits with the baby (contact) and any other requirement. This is a town centre property on a busy main road/side street. There is easy walking access to all facilities – shops, parks, library, health care.

Nothing to suggest any anti-social behaviours would occur – quite the opposite. Residents sign an acceptable behaviour contract at the start of the placement – if they break this, the placement ends and the baby is likely to go into foster care. Resident parents are on their best behaviour as they are being assessed. The proposal would be very different to a children's home. No families are accepted who have current drug and/or alcohol dependence and drugs and alcohol are not permitted on the premises. CCTV would be fitted throughout the property and externally to support the monitoring of parents on a consistent basis.

Sisu Services Ltd are registered, inspected and regulated by Ofsted. This ensures the highest of standards in terms of the service we provide and includes strict regulations of health and safety. They are responsible for maintaining the property internally and externally ensuring that it is in good repair and fit for purpose. Any failure on their part to adhere to this could result in the business being shut down. No changes to the external of the property other than to make it more appealing in order to get and keep their registration would be undertaken.

There would not be any increased noise or activity other than what would already be reasonably expected from properties of this size. Professional visits to the property would be minimal. Local Authority staff are likely to only visit approx. 3 times each placement (statutory requirement). Midwifery/health visitor – likely to be the same professional for each family so sees them all at the same time. Unlikely to have other professional visits as the services required would be provided by our own staff. Again, no more visitors than a residential setting.

This setting is an investment to prevent future spends – longer term financial benefit to Local Councils – costs for these kids to go into care and requirement for future services results in literally hundreds of thousands of pounds per family. Turning families around in accommodation such as this is much more beneficial than reliance on Council and NHS

services. This would also create Jobs for local people, business rates for the council, use of local shops, trades and businesses would increase.

Planning History:

Of most relevance and most recent is

Application 3/2023/0173- Certificate of Lawfulness – Proposed- Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed use of the two existing flats to house young families for short to medium periods of time with occasional stay-overs. Development address - 14 Inglewhite Road. APPROVED AS LAWFUL 01/06/2023.

Application 3/2013/0756- Applications for full consent - Conversion of Existing dwelling to form 2 No residential Units- Development address 14 Inglewhite Road Longridge Lancashire PR3 3JS. APPROVED 01/10/2013

No Planning history is shown online for number 16 Inglewhite Road.

Assessment

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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 current Local Development Plan for the site comprises the following:

- Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy (2014)
- Housing and Economic Development DPD (2015)
- Emerging Local Plan

In May 2022, the Council reached the first regulation stage of the plan-making process in the form of a Local Plan Review and consulted with residents and other stakeholders on the strategic issues to consider as part of the new local plan. Having regard to paragraph 48 of the NPPF, it is obvious that the Emerging Local Plan Review cannot be given any weight given the infancy of this preparation and adoption.

National Planning Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was originally published in 2012 and recently revised in December 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration for the determination of all planning applications.

Relevant chapters of the NPPF to this proposal are set out as follows:

- Achieving Sustainable Development Chapter 2
- Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes Chapter 5

- Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities Chapter 8
- Promoting Sustainable Transport Chapter 9
- Making Effective Use of Land Chapter 11
- Achieving Well Designed and Beautiful Places Chapter 12
- Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment Chapter 15

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF explains that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

i) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

ii) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

iii) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

A recent report into the pressures on children's social care published by the Department of Education dated 23rd January 2019 highlights the critical need for increased provision of children's social care accommodation, with the number of children in care gradually rising from 43.2 per 10,000 in 1994, to 64 per 10,000 in 2018, equating to an increase in 48%. The report estimates that as of 31st March 2018, the number of children in need of social care is estimated to stand at 404,710. The findings of the report clearly highlight that there are extreme pressures on the provision of children's social care operated by Local Authorities due to a number of factors – not least because of a lack of funding.

The application seeks the change of use as detailed above which would help to reduce the pressure on children's social care. Core Strategy (CS) Key Statement DS1 sets out the strategic strategy for where new development will be delivered, targeted towards the larger towns and villages, and that development opportunities will be created for economic, social and environmental well-being and development for future generations. CS Key Statement DS2 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development that forms the crux of the NPPF and confirms that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, working proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved where possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. CS Key Statement EC1 refers to Economic

Development and states that proposals that result in the loss of existing employment sites to other forms of development will need to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact upon the local economy.

The Local Development Plan appears to be broadly silent with regards to strategic or development management policies aimed at delivering a social care facility of this nature. Chapter 5 of the NPPF contains national planning policies designed to deliver a sufficient supply of homes across the country. Paragraph 70 of the NPPF makes clear that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting housing requirements of an area, and that local authorities should give great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements. Chapter 8 of the NPPF contains national policies aimed at supporting healthy and sustainable communities. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF states that in order to provide the social, recreational, and cultural facilities and services the community needs, policies and decisions should (amongst other things) plan positively for the provision of...community facilities (including places of worship), and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. Chapter 11 of the NPPF contains relevant national planning policies aimed to make effective use of existing land. Paragraph 123 states that decisions should promote effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF goes on to state that decisions should (amongst other things) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing.

The alterations to the existing buildings at numbers 14 to 16 would add both separate buildings together by way of an internal door. This would create better facilities for the already approved existing RFC at number 14 under the approved Lawful Development Certificate. Essentially it connects the two properties up and creates a new five bedroom unit.

The application site is not constrained by any statutory designation that are subject to any of the restrictive policy areas set out at footnote 7 to paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

The dwellinghouse and its curtilage is located in a relatively sustainable location, being in the central location of the market town of Longridge and within the designated settlement boundary of Longridge. The town is home to a wealth of everyday shops, services, facilities, and educational institutions, served by public transport, and it is considered that the nature of the proposed use is commensurate with its rural location.

The proposed use responds positively to the chronic under provision of this type of social care provision and involves the re-use of a building, that does not involve any new physical development, extensions or alterations, thereby supporting the strategic objectives set out under CS Policies DS1 and DMG2.

As such and given that the Local Development Plan being silent on development proposals of this nature, it is submitted that the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged. In light of the clear need for this type of development, and the planning policy context set out above, it is considered that the proposed change of use should be actively welcomed and supported as a matter of principle

by the LPA, and that planning permission should be granted unless there are any adverse impacts that are found to outweigh the presumption in favour development.

Given that the proposal does not involve any new physical development, extensions or alterations to the existing property, it is considered that there would be no material change to the character and appearance of the site or wider area, thus supporting the aims and objectives of CS Policies DMG1 and DMG2.

CS Policy DMG1 contains a number of general principles that all new developments should adhere to, which includes the following in relation to amenity, with all developments required to:

- (i) Not adversely affecting the amenities of the surrounding area
- (ii) Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances
- (iii) Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles
- (iv) Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires the amenity of all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings to be preserved as a result of any new development proposal. Paragraph 190 of the NPPF requires policies and decisions to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account likely effects on living conditions, which includes potential impacts resulting from noise and light pollution.

It is acknowledged that the site is within a row of residential properties, however as detailed above this proposal would connect up the existing use at number 14 with number 16. The use proposed would have the look and character of a conventional residential dwelling, and the use gives rise to no greater level of disturbance or amenity effects than could be generated by a C3 single dwelling use.

A key element in the proposals here in terms of whether there would actually be any adverse impacts upon residential amenities, is the level of noise and disturbance created. In this case as is detailed within the section of this document entitled Application Proposals the use is unlikely to cause any significant noise or disturbance. Sisu Services Ltd are registered, inspected and regulated by Ofsted. This ensures the highest of standards in terms of the service provided and includes strict regulations of health and safety. The site will be appropriately run and managed to ensure no increased noise or disturbance occurs. The site would still be in use by families (that being a parent and child/children) where Children's Services have identified a potential risk for the child that needs further assessment and/or support. The expected average stay is 12 weeks to allow a comprehensive parenting assessment to be completed.

One could argue that this fairly comparable to arrangements where residents receive regular, but not live-in, care (this is particularly common where elderly members of the community require regular care but do not wish to leave their homes). The household would still be considered a household.

As such, in this case the household (that being the parent and children) would remain and live in the dwelling, albeit receiving regular care from the patterned shift workers. The ‘type’ of care – whether that be medical, as in the case of the example, or more supervisory, as in the case of this application, is not accounted for within the Use Class Order and as such is considered immaterial so long as that it can reasonably be considered as ‘care’.

For the reasons set out above, it is submitted that the proposed change of use would not give rise to any harmful adverse impacts to the amenity of future occupiers of the building, or indeed materially impact any neighbouring land use. Essentially, the proposed use is compatible with surrounding uses, taking account of the existing lawful use of the site and its surroundings. It is therefore submitted that the application is fully compliant with CS Policy DMG1, and paragraphs 135 and 190 of the NPPF.

CS Policy DMG1 contains a number of general principles that all new developments should adhere to, which includes the following in relation to access, with all developments required to:

- (i) Consider the potential traffic and car parking implications
- (ii) Ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated
- (iii) Consider the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access

CS Policy DMG3 relates to Transport and Mobility and states that when making decisions, the Local Authority will give considerable weight to (amongst other things) the following:

(i) the relationship of the site to the primary route network and the strategic road network
The policy goes on to state the following: “All development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and serving space in line with currently approved standards...”

Paragraph 114 of the NPPF requires that local authorities, when assessing specific applications for development, ensure that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF goes on to state that development should only be prevented or refused on highway safety grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Access to the site will continue to be as existing. In this case the use is not significantly different to that of a family dwelling house in terms of activities and vehicle movements. The site is close to the town centre and well served by public transport and existing car parks. Number 14 was previously in use as 2 self contained flats with limited parking provision. As such the proposals in our view are unlikely to result in any significant increased parking demand or on street parking congestion.

Policy within the Local Plan and Sections 2 and 9 of the NPPF both place emphasis upon securing sustainable forms of development. It is considered that the development proposed by this application could reasonably be viewed as meeting this aim in so far as it seeks the development of a site that is located within the main built-up area.

The site has the capacity to accommodate the development in an acceptable manner which meets the needs of future occupants, including the provision of adequate access, parking and, the proposal does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area nor residential amenities.

The application comprises a sustainable form of development that is entirely consistent with the policy aims at national and local levels. The benefits of the scheme therefore meet the principle in the NPPF to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of an area through sustainable development.

Taking into consideration the mixed uses and properties within the area, it is our view that this does not impact the character or appearance of the area, street scene, site or surroundings nor residential amenities.

Conclusion:

Following a review of the development now completed and the applicable policy and material considerations it is of our professional view that the development is in compliance with all applicable policies as previously illustrated.

The NPPF identifies a series of the components that are considered critical to achieving sustainable development. In my opinion, the above assessment of the planning application demonstrates that the application responds to, and is in accordance with, the requirements of the adopted planning policy within the development plan and material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The scheme would provide an opportunity to improve and bring back into use the existing dwelling.

We see no reason for the council to refuse our request for planning approval and kindly request for a timely decision to be made in line with applicable guidance of the NPPF.

Should any further information be requested to assist in the council's assessment of the proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you,

Kind regards,

Mark Mirams BA (Hons) PG Dip MRTPI
Planning Consultant
T 0203 581 1233
info@studiocharrette.co.uk
www.studiocharrette.co.uk