

**ITEM NO:**

Application No.  
**16/00737/3**  
Site Address:

Ward:  
Wildridings And Central

Date Registered:  
4 August 2016

Target Decision Date:  
29 September 2016

**Heathlands Home For The Aged Crossfell Bracknell  
Berkshire RG12 7RX**

Proposal:

**Change of use from care home (C2) to a house in multiple occupation (Sui Generis) up to 22 bedrooms for a temporary period of 3 years.**

Applicant:

Bracknell Forest Council

Agent:

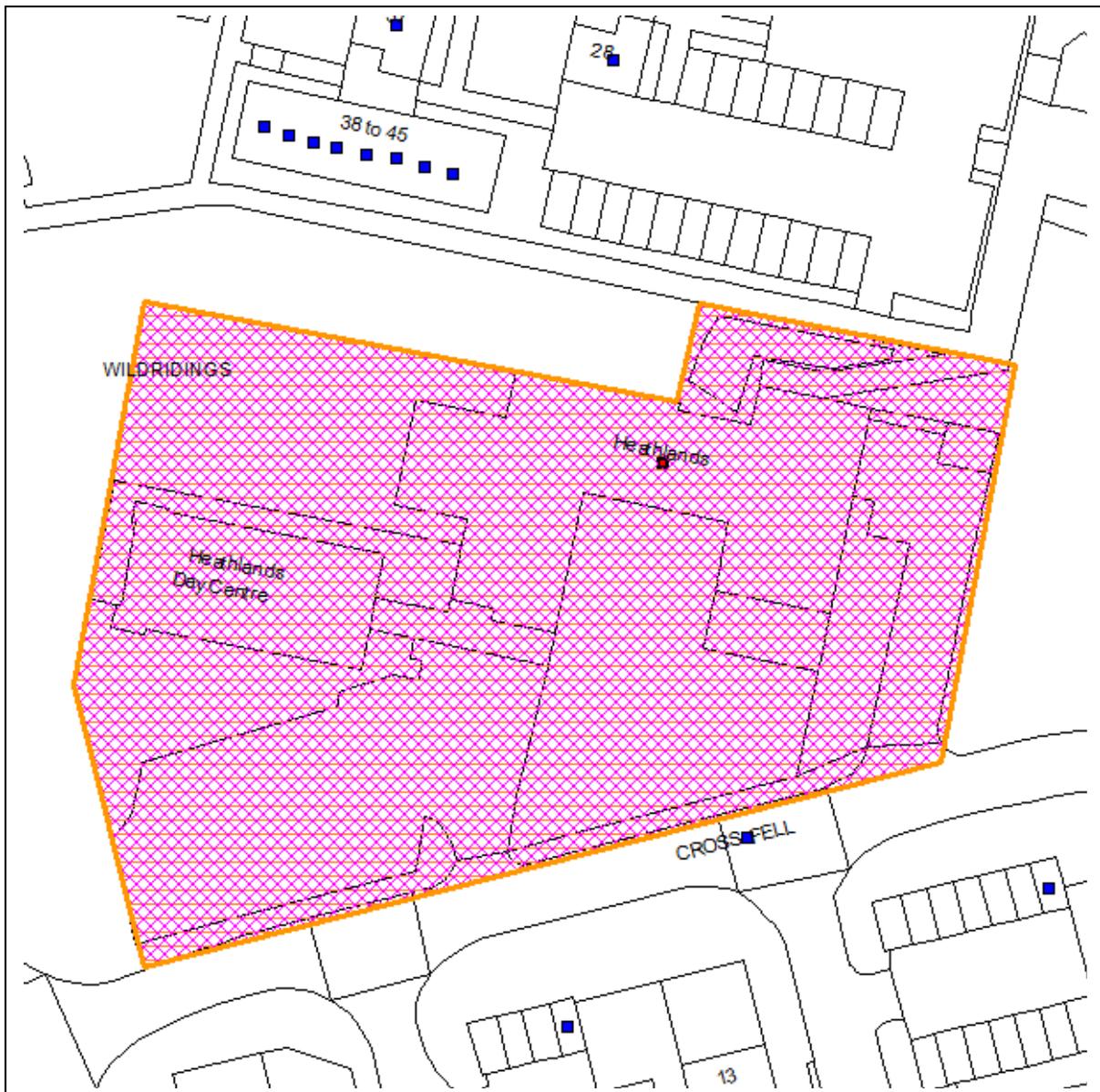
(There is no agent for this application)

Case Officer:

Katie Walker, 01344 352000

[development.control@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

**Site Location Plan** (for identification purposes only, not to scale)



## 1. SUMMARY

1.1 The proposal is for the change of use of Heathlands Home For the Aged to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). This would be leased by the Council to Ad Hoc Property, and it would be occupied by 22 “Property Guardians”, who are working people selected by a property guardian company to live in the HMO with the purpose of keeping the vacant building secure.

1.2 The proposed development relates to a site within the settlement boundary and is therefore acceptable in principle. It would not adversely affect the residential amenities of neighbouring properties and would not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposals would be acceptable in terms of highway safety and parking subject to the recommended conditions. Relevant conditions will be imposed in relation to detailed design, biodiversity and sustainability and a section 106 agreement will be entered into in relation to impacts on the SPA.

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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Planning permission be granted subject to conditions in Section 11 of this report.
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## 2. REASON FOR REPORTING APPLICATION TO COMMITTEE

2.1 The application has been reported to the Planning Committee following the receipt of more than 3 objections and was also called to Committee by Councillor Turrell.

## 3. PLANNING STATUS AND SITE DESCRIPTION

<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>
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Within settlement boundary
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Within 5km of the SPA
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3.2 The site is the now vacant Heathlands Home for the Aged, which was a care home. It is bounded to the south by the houses and garages of Cross Fell; to the east by Cross Fell and Wildridings Square; to the north by residential properties in Deepdale; and to the west by Wildridings Road, beyond which is open recreation land. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with shops in Wildridings Square.

3.3 The Heathlands Care Home building is part two storey, part three storey building which housed up to 41 elderly residents with associated kitchens and facilities. There is an annex to the main building which formed a day centre for the home. There are 26 car parking spaces marked out on the hard standing associated with the building.

3.4 The site is located in an urban setting within a defined settlement as shown on the Bracknell Forest Policies Map.

## 4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:

15035: Hostel for the elderly – approved 1969.

18837: Application for erection of sitting room extension – approved 1973.

616229: Erection of community care unit for care of the elderly – approved 1990.

08/00019/3: Erection of single storey extension forming conservatory – approved 2008.

## 5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1 The proposal is for the change of use of the building to an HMO. The property would be occupied by property guardians from a company called Ad Hoc. The proposal would provide accommodation at an affordable rate for working people, with the purpose of keeping the vacant building secure. All people living in the building would need to be approved by Ad Hoc.

5.2 There would be a maximum of 22 property guardians in the former care home: 19 in the main building and 3 in the annex. They would each have either one or two rooms. Where a guardian would be allocated two rooms, one would be a bedroom and the other would be for storage.

5.3 The proposed HMO would house property guardians to keep the building secure until its long term future has been determined, and as such the proposed change of use would be temporary, for three years.

## 6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

### Town Council

6.1 Bracknell Town Council responded to the consultation with observations, stating that not enough information was given regarding refurbishments, parking information or target residents.

### Other Letters of Representation

6.2 Sixteen letters of objection were received from thirteen households. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- An increase in 41 vehicles would be unacceptable in terms of traffic, parking and access in the surrounding area [*Officer note: the number of property guardians would be conditioned to be a maximum of 22 and parking impacts are considered in this report*].
- There is likely to be an increase in noise from the larger number of people and vehicles;
- Loss of the care home [*Officer note: this matter is discussed in this report*];
- Impact on the school [*Officer note: the proposal would not impact the school*].
- Reduced number of occupants will not resolve issues of parking as it is reasonable to assume that the households in the HMO would have two cars [*Officer note: parking is proposed at one space per occupant plus 4 visitor spaces. This is discussed in the officer report*].
- Reduced number of occupants will not resolve concerns over noise and disturbance and highway safety.
- Council has been misleading as to who the bedsits will be offered to. One has already been offered to a single Council tenant [*Officer note: The Council's housing department has confirmed that this is not the case*].
- Antisocial behaviour.
- The purpose of the building has changed three times [*Officer note: consultations were sent out to clarify the use of the building; and secondly because the proposed number of tenants was reduced from 41 to 22. The use of the building as an HMO for property guardians has not changed*].
- Unemployed and antisocial people will be housed here [*Officer note: a condition is recommended to restrict the occupants to those selected by Ad Hoc Property Guardians*].

6.3 Two other representations were made, neither supporting or objecting to the application, both of which asked who the target residents would be. [*Officer note: Clarity has been sought on this point and residents were reconsulted*].

## 7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

7.1 The following consultees have provided comments on the application, summarised below and within the report:

Environmental Health: No objection, informative recommended.

Transportation Officer: Bedrooms should be revised down from original proposal of 41 bedrooms. See officer report.

## 8. MAIN POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

8.1 The primary strategic planning considerations applying to the site and the associated policies are:

	<b>Development Plan</b>	<b>NPPF</b>
General policies	CP1 of SALP, CS1 and CS2 of CSDPD	Consistent
Housing	CS15 of CSDPD	Consistent
Design	CS7 of CSDPD, Saved policy EN20 of BFBLP	Consistent
Parking	Saved policy M9 of BFBLP	Consistent
Transport	CS23 of CSDPD	Consistent
SPA	SEP Retained Policy NRM6, Saved Policy EN3 of CSDPD and Policy CS14 of CSDPD	Consistent
Waste	Policy CS13 of CSDPD.	Consistent
<b>Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)</b>		
Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPD)		
Parking standards (SPD)		
<b>Other publications</b>		
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)		
CIL Charging Schedule		

## 9. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 The key issues for consideration are:

- i Principle of development
- ii Impact on character and appearance of the area
- iii Impact on residential amenity
- iv Transport implications
- v Waste
- vi SPA
- vii Community Infrastructure Levy

### i. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

9.2 The application site is located within a defined settlement as designated by the Bracknell Forest Borough Policies Map and relates to an existing building.

9.3 The proposal would result in the loss of 41 care home bedspaces, on a temporary basis of three years. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment assesses the need for Residential Care Homes between 2013 and 2036 and the net need for Bracknell Forest is 319 net bedspaces which is equivalent to 14 net bedspaces per year. Therefore, between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2016, 42 net bedspaces should have been delivered. There has been a net loss of 24 bedspaces during the specified period, resulting in an outstanding need for 66 bedspaces. However, there are outstanding commitments (with planning permission) for 184 bedspaces and 124 of those are under construction.

9.4 BFBLP Policy H11 seeks to retain housing stock and resist development which would result in the loss of housing, including residential institutions. However, the applicant has explained that Heathlands, as it stands, does not meet the relevant standards for care homes in terms of space of rooms and facilities. A feasibility study is currently being undertaken to establish if there is scope to redevelop the site to provide accommodation for elderly and mentally infirm at more modern standards, which is why a temporary permission is proposed.

9.5 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF states that local authorities should plan for a mix of housing, and paragraph 51 states that local authorities should bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings.

9.6 The proposal would provide accommodation for 22 people in a building which is currently vacant, contributing to the supply of housing within the Borough, albeit on a temporary basis. The proposed change of use would be on a temporary basis so that the long term future of the site can be considered. Therefore, the principle of development on this site is acceptable.

## **ii. IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF AREA**

9.7 The proposal does not include any external changes to the building, and as such the character and appearance of the area would not be impacted through the change of use. The proposed building would be in residential use, appropriate to the residential character of the area.

9.8 It is therefore considered that the development would not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and it would be in line with CSDPD Policy CS7, BFBLP 'Saved' Policy EN20 or the NPPF.

## **iii. IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY**

9.9 As set out above, the proposed change of use does not include any external changes to the buildings, so would not have any impacts in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts over and above the existing building.

9.10 While not usually a planning matter, inspectors from the property guardian company inspect the property, and if there are any issues in terms of untidiness or noise, the tenants would be issued with a warning and would be asked to leave after three warnings. This would ensure that there would be no undue noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties as a result of the proposal.

9.11 The proposed use, as an HMO for working people, would be compatible with the surrounding residential use and would not cause undue noise and disturbance to the occupiers of surrounding residential properties. The development would therefore not be contrary to BFBLP 'Saved' Policy EN20 or the NPPF.

#### **iv. TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS**

9.12 Following the original objection from the Highways Authority on the grounds of insufficient parking for a 41 bedroom HMO, the scheme has been revised so that there would be a maximum of 22 residents.

##### **Access**

9.13 Heathlands Home for the Aged takes access off Cross Fell, an adopted residential cul-de-sac which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. There are currently two accesses, the westernmost access to a main car park and the easternmost access appears to be a delivery and servicing access. No changes are proposed to existing access arrangements and vehicles can pass at the car park with adequate sight-lines available. There is likely to be much less delivery and servicing traffic as a result of this proposed change of use.

9.14 There is an adopted lit footpath (accessed via a ramped access) behind Heathlands leading through to Deepdale and the bus turnaround and local shops. Also, there is a footpath/cycle route to the east providing access further afield.

##### **Parking**

9.15 The Council does not have a parking standard for a HMO. However, in this case it would be reasonable to require the Council's residential parking standards. These standards require 1 parking space per 1 bedroom flat and 2 spaces per 2 bedroom flat, as well as 1 visitor space per 5 flats. The proposal would provide 20 bedrooms each for 1 person, and one 2-bedroom unit, generating a parking requirement of 22 parking spaces plus visitor spaces. The proposals include the provision of 26 parking spaces. This would equate to 22 spaces for the residents, in line with standards, plus 4 visitor spaces. Visitor spaces should be provided as 1 per 5 flats, and for 21 flats, 4 spaces is considered acceptable.

9.16 Cycle parking is required in line with the parking standards. The applicant has indicated that 30 cycle spaces, which is in excess of standards, would be provided within the building, in the disused rooms of the care home. These would be accessed using a key pad. In addition, some of the guardians would be allocated additional storage rooms and may choose to store their bikes in these rooms.

##### **Trips**

9.17 A 22-bed HMO is likely to generate in the region of 54 two-way movements per day and this is likely to be lower than the traffic generated by the existing care home by staff, visitors, including medical visits and deliveries and servicing.

9.18 Subject to the proposed condition, the application is in line with CSDPD Policy CS23 and Saved Policy M9 of the BFBLP.

#### **v. WASTE**

9.19 The proposal does not seek changes from the waste arrangements that were in place for the care home. There are two existing bin stores enclosures; one to the south of the main building, and one to the east of the site and guardians would take their rubbish to large communal bins within the store for collection. Both bin stores have facilities for general waste as well as recycling. Given that this is an existing arrangement, this is considered to be acceptable. In addition, the property guardian company inspects the properties and any tenants creating mess, including leaving rubbish out not in the communal bin store, would be given a

warning. This would ensure that the proposal is in line with CSDPD Policy CS13 in terms of waste management as well as BFBLP Policy EN20.

#### **vi. SPA**

9.20 The Council, in consultation with Natural England, has formed the view that any net increase in residential development between 400m and 5km straight-line distance from the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

9.21 There are 41 lockable rooms in the existing building and 22 HMO units proposed. This amounts to a net decrease in the number of units so there is no impact upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and therefore no mitigation measures are required. The proposal would not lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA and would comply with SEP Retained Policy NRM6, Saved policy EN3 of the BFBLP and CS14 of CSDPD.

#### **vii. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

9.22 Bracknell Forest Council introduced charging for its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 6th April 2015. CIL is applied as a charge on each square metre of new development. The amount payable varies depending on the location of the development within the borough and the type of development.

9.23 CIL applies to any new build (except outline applications and some reserved matters applications that leave some reserved matters still to be submitted), including extensions of 100 square metres of gross internal floor space, or more, or new build that involves the creation of additional dwellings.

9.24 In this case, the proposal would not be CIL liable as it relates to a change of use with no change to existing floor area.

### **10. CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 The proposed development relates to a site within the settlement boundary. While it would result in a loss of care home bedspaces, the home is currently vacant and the proposal would re use this vacant building on a temporary basis to provide additional residential accommodation within the Borough. It is therefore acceptable in principle. No external changes are proposed to the building as such it would not adversely affect the residential amenities of neighbouring properties and would not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. No highway safety implications will arise subject to the imposition of conditions, and no SPA contribution is required. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with 'Saved' Policies EN20 and M9 of the BFBLP, CS1, CS2, CS7 and CS23 of the CSDPD and Policy CP1 of the SALP, all in accordance with the NPPF.

### **11. RECOMMENDATION**

That the application be approved subject to the following condition(s):-

01. The use hereby permitted shall be discontinued on or before three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To allow the Local Planning Authority to retain the original use of the building once the HMO use ceases.

02. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and details received by the Local Planning Authority:

Location plan, received 04/08/2016

Block Plan, received 03/07/2016

Ground and First Floor Buildings A&B, received 22/07/2016

Rooms in use plan, received 20/09/2016  
Floorplan with rooms for cycle storage, received 22/09/2016

REASONS: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

03. The HMO hereby permitted shall be occupied only by occupants as selected by Ad Hoc Property Guardians.

REASON: To allow the Local Planning Authority to retain control over the use of the premises.

04. The number of people living in the HMO hereby approved shall not exceed 22 at any one time.

REASON: In order to ensure that there is sufficient on-site parking in the interests of road safety.

[Relevant Plans and Policies: BFBLP M9]

Informative(s):

01. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission subject to conditions, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

02. The following conditions do not require any details to be submitted, but must be complied with:

1. Time limit.
2. Approved plans.
3. Occupation by Ad Hoc property guardians only.
4. Occupation restriction to 22 people.

03. This application is for a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). There is not enough information to ascertain ratios of sharing and facilities. This property falls under Mandatory HMO Licensing and will require an HMO Licence if controlled/managed by anyone (individual or corporate body) other than the Council. Further advice about relevant requirements, including the HMO Licence application process, should be obtained from Environmental Health.