

DELEGATED

**AGENDA NO
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE 29 JUNE 2011

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

11/0988/LA

**Former Redcar Road Neighbourhood Housing Office, Redcar Road, Thornaby
Conversion of estate office into children's home and erection of 1.8 metre timber fence**

Expiry Date 5 July 2011

SUMMARY

The application relates to a disused and currently vacant former neighbourhood office situated in a residential area of Thornaby. The building stands on the corner of the residential streets Redcar Road and Ayton Road. The building is about the same size as a pair of semi-detached houses, and has similar appearance and materials to the surrounding predominantly terraced houses. The site is within a residential area and the settlement of Thornaby where in principle the conversion to a housing use can be considered.

The intention is that Stockton Borough Council would run the home with responsibility to a registered manager who is suitably qualified and experienced and agreed by OFSTED. There will be 2 staff on duty at all times and a member of staff sleeping over. The children would be those in care who have suffered significant harm and who cannot return to their parents and who would stay on a long term basis. The age range would be 11 up to 18 but with no more than 3 years difference between the oldest and youngest and be both boys and girls.

The proposed conversion would see physical changes internally to create living spaces and bedrooms for up to 4 children and one adult supervisor. There would be a room within the home for education for children as needed. Externally some windows and a door would be closed up and a door created from a window and a new window added to the rear. The tarmac car park would be reduced to 2 spaces and the entrance closed up by brick walling except for a pedestrian gate. The physical changes would improve the appearance of the building and be sympathetic to its character and that of the surrounding housing estate.

Neighbours have been notified and in addition the Council has carried out separate public community involvement exercise by separate letters and a public meeting." 10 letters of objection have been received raising concerns based on anti-social behaviour, impact on regeneration of the area, house prices, noise pollution from vehicles, lack of consultation and lack of details, that it would be a private run home, that it is not social housing and impact on privacy. A petition with 113 signatories has been received which states "We the undersigned are totally against the former housing office Redcar Road, Thornaby being converted into a children's home of any kind.

The changes to the building can be achieved without adverse impacts on the amenity and privacy of neighbours and that allow the proposed use as a home to function. At the same time its appearance would be improved without significantly alteration to its character.

Statutory consultees have responded to consultation. The Head of Technical Services Highway advice is that 3 car parking spaces are required. An amended plan is awaited showing this car parking provided on site. The Environmental Health officer has no objections subject to conditions on contamination and timing of construction works.

The proposal would not conflict with Government advice or planning policies and subject to conditions restricting construction hours, discovery of contamination and that it incorporates Secure by Design recommendations the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning application 11/0988/LA be Approved with Conditions subject to

01 *The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s); unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.*

<i>Plan Reference Number</i>	<i>Date on Plan</i>
<i>ARC1186.0381.03</i>	<i>26 April 2011</i>
<i>ARC1186.0381.01</i>	<i>26 April 2011</i>
<i>ARC1186.0381.02 REV A</i>	<i>26 April 2011</i>
<i>ARC1186.0381.04</i>	<i>26 April 2011</i>
<i>ARC1186.0381.05 REV B</i>	<i>17 June 2011</i>

Reason: To define the consent.

02. *No construction/building works or deliveries shall be carried out except between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm on Mondays to Fridays and between 9.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays. There shall be no construction activity including demolition on Sundays or on Bank Holidays.*

Reason: To avoid excessive noise and disturbance to the occupants of nearby premises.

03. *In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, works must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination and it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority prior to resumption of the works*

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

INFORMATIVES

The proposal has been considered against the Core Strategy and saved policies below and it is considered that the scheme accords with these policies as the development is considered to be

acceptable in principle, in keeping with the appearance and character of the surrounding area and does not involve any significant loss of privacy and amenity for the residents of the neighbouring properties and does not adversely affect highway safety and there are no other material considerations which indicate a decision should be otherwise.

Core Strategy

Core Strategy Policy 8 (CS8) Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

Core Strategy Policy 10 (CS10) Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Stockton on Tees Local Plan Saved Policies

HO3 residential Development

Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing June 2011

Supplementary Planning Document Note 3: Parking Provision for New Developments November 2006.

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2: Householder Extension Guide February 2004.

BACKGROUND

1. A planning application was submitted under reference No.05/1200/FUL for alterations to improve the accessibility of the offices for the disabled. This was deemed to be permitted development and a decision was not necessary.

PROPOSAL

2. The proposal is to change the use of the former neighbourhood housing office to a children's home. This involves some internal changes to the internal layout to subdivide rooms create bedrooms and access routes and closing up door openings. Externally one of the entrance doors would be closed up on the front elevation, two windows would be closed up on the western side elevation and another closed up at first floor on the rear elevation. A window on the rear would become a back door and a window for an office would be opened up on the rear ground floor. Other existing window openings would have new windows fitted and new Tyrolean rendering would be applied to the walls. The disabled access ramps up to the doors on the front and western end of the building would be removed.
3. The existing tarmac car park to the front of the building would be laid to grass and the vehicular access closed to a pedestrian gate only. Paved footpaths would be formed around the building and to the gate. A 1.8m high timber fence would be erected to close off access to either side of the building to form a private rear garden.
4. The supporting documentation states that Stockton Borough Council will run the home. The children in care would come from all backgrounds and have suffered significant harm. The age range would be from 11 up to 18 with only 3 years difference between the oldest and youngest. The children, both boys and girls, will stay on a long term basis. Two staff would be on duty at all times and a member of staff sleeping over. A small staff team will be in place and they will cover shifts over a 24 hour period. There would be a room within the home for education for those children in care who cannot attend school or who are waiting for a school to be identified.

CONSULTATIONS

5. The following Consultees were notified and comments received are summarised below:-
6. **Stockton Police**

Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act, 1998 has placed a duty upon local planning authorities to exercise their functions with due regard both to the effect on and the need to do all they can to prevent crime and disorder. 'Policy on Design and Planning out Crime' PPS1, states that crime prevention is a material consideration.

Cleveland Police operate the 'Secured by Design' initiative. This is an ACPO and Home Office scheme which promotes the inclusion of architectural crime prevention measures into new projects. If the following recommendations are included, the award can be achieved.

A safe and secure environment is the prime objective of the *Secured by Design* requirements and recommendations. To achieve this objective, equal weight should be given to both environmental design and physical security. Local conditions will influence to some degree the measures to be adopted. This is detailed in the ODPM Guide "Safer Places – The Planning System & Crime Prevention" (available from the ODPM – odpm.gov.uk/planning and www.securedbydesign.com).

By achieving Secure by Design accreditation this site will reduce the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour to occur within it.

Access and Movement.

The access and movement through the development appears to be of an acceptable standard, there is no permeability into the area except from the main access gates as illustrated.

Structure

Due to the fact the application is a change of use; the design of the building is not to be altered and appears to be fit for purpose. All areas within the development should have a clearly defined use.

Surveillance

All aspects of the building should benefit from good natural surveillance. Well lit spaces are crucial to reducing the fear of crime and it should be used to ensure good natural surveillance is available during the hours of darkness.

Any shrubbery/hedges that are to be planted should be of a species that will not readily grow above 1metre in height. An open and bright place not only reduces the number of potential hiding places of potential offenders, but also reduces the fear of crime.

CCTV

The installation of a CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) system should be a prime consideration, the development of an Operational Requirement Statement should be utilised; this document is unique to each system and will be used for the design, performance specification and functionality of the system. It is a statement of problems, not solutions and highlights the areas to be covered by the system and the times and description of the activities giving cause for concern.

It is also important to decide what standard of image is required i.e. close up or general view. This is dictated by the use to which the system will be put to and whether it is intended to monitor activity or detect offenders. Clear facial recognition is essential to recognise or identify any offender. It is essential that a recorded CCTV system can supply clear images that can be used as valid evidence in a court of law.

The provision and use of CCTV fits well within the overall framework of security management and is most effective when it forms a part of an overall security plan.

If possible all sides of the building should be covered by CCTV surveillance, consider installing fixed cameras that have the capability to view along the building lines, fully functional cameras have a definite purpose in certain applications when viewing a general area or a monitored system, however, due to the time delay when rotating on a tour programme, incidents can be missed. Although more cameras are required, fixed cameras are often more effective and will always be covering building lines where intruders must approach to gain access to the building.

Internal cameras should be located at entrance points, stairwells, corridors and communal areas.

CCTV systems may be legally required to be registered with the Information Commissioner. The CCTV system and its operation should be compliant with the Commissioner's guidelines. See www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk for more information.

Ownership

All space must be clearly defined and adequately protected in terms of use and ownership. It should be clear what areas are public, semi-public, semi-private or private. This is achievable through the creation of defensible space.

I would recommend that the following boundary treatments be implemented. The Redcar Road and Ayton Road side treatment to the development be of 1.8 metre close boarded fencing with a 200mm boxed trellis topping.

Physical Protection

The physical security of the development is of utmost importance to enhance its sustainability.

Good signage should be provided to deter unauthorised access and to assist emergency services, trades persons, etc.

7. Community Protection Department

No comments received.

8. Councillor Stephen Walmsley

(Councillor) Tina (Large) and I have no objections and would rather that the building was put to good use rather than dereliction and attracting vandalism, etc.

9. Head of Technical Services

General Summary

Subject to the amendments below Urban Design has no objections.

Highways Comments

The applicant states that the number of staff is unknown, however 1 staff bedroom is shown and it can be assumed that there will be additional staff and professional visitors. Only 1 car parking space is shown and the proposed timber fence would block visibility for vehicles exiting that space.

The plans should be amended to show 3 incurtilage car parking spaces and the fence reduced in height for 2.4m along the proposed drive.

The applicant should contact Direct Services regarding the redundant dropped vehicle crossing which must be reinstated to footway/kerb.

Landscape & Visual Comments

We have no objection from a landscape and visual viewpoint, however we would like to see details of the wrought iron gates.

10. Environmental Health Unit

I have no objection in principle to the development and would recommend the conditions as detailed be imposed on the development should it be approved.

Construction Noise

All construction operations including delivery of materials on site shall be restricted to 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m on weekdays, 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. on a Saturday and no Sunday or Bank Holiday working.

Unexpected land contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, works must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination and it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority prior to resumption of the works.

11. Waste Management

No comments received.

12. PUBLICITY

13. Neighbours were notified and comments received are summarised below :-

14. Individual objections have been received from the following:

15. Village Park Residents Association Peter Brennan, Sec Village Park Residents Assoc

16. Stewart and Vivienne Featherstone 4 Stannage Grove Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8LF

Mrs C Whiley	4 The Crescent Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8BD
Mrs G Sturdy	25 Redcar Road Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8LB
W McCue	27 Redcar Road Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8LB
Mrs G Bennett	31 Redcar Road Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8LG
Norma Williams	33 Redcar Road Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8LG
Peter McCue	14 St Margaret's Grove Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8JR
Mr Steve Walker	19 Northumberland Road Thornaby Stockton on Tees TS17 8AY
Mark Oliver	owner of 35 Northumberland Road

17. The reasons for objection are summarised as follows:

1. The area already suffers with a large amount of anti-social behaviour adding children with behavioural problems will only add to the existing problem.
2. Changing the use of this building will have an adverse effect on the re-generation of the area.
3. House prices in the area will never rise in the area.
4. This residential area will suffer negatively from noise pollution from deliveries to and from the home and from parking for staff and or visitors.

5. This application will have a direct impact on whether people actually buy properties in the area.
 6. There has been no true and transparent consultation with local residents.
 7. No details about the organisation who will run this establishment.
 8. Thornaby has enough problems of its own, we are all pulling together to make it a better place to live, we simply do not have the capacity to take on other towns problems!!
 9. Thornaby is not a dumping ground or soft touch for a money making venture that will have an adverse impact on the improvements that have taken place to date.
 10. A lack of information in the application seems to be hiding the true facts.
 11. If this is a private run home then they can more or less do what they want with disregard to the many residents that pass by on the way to shops and buses.
 12. There is more need for social housing than a 4 bed home.
 13. The home would be in what is already considered to be an anti-social behaviour hotspot.
 14. Would the council be held accountable for any damage, or distress any of the youths may cause or be involved in?
 15. The unconvincing talk given to our residents meeting gave no real assurances regarding possible anti social behaviour and other associated concerns.
 16. The rear elevation of the above premises, particularly the first floor overlooks the rear garden of my home, thus severely compromising my privacy.
18. A petition with 113 signatories has been received with the first signatories being: Mr and Mrs Whitfield, 46 Redcar Road Thornaby. The petition stated "We the undersigned are totally against the former housing office Redcar Road, Thornaby being converted into a children's home of any kind."

PLANNING POLICY

19. Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plan is the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP)

Ministerial Statement from Greg Clark

"When deciding whether to grant planning permission, local planning authorities should support enterprise and facilitate housing, economic and other forms of sustainable development. Where relevant - and consistent with their statutory obligations - they should therefore:

- (i) consider fully the importance of national planning policies aimed at fostering economic growth and employment, given the need to ensure a return to robust growth after the recent recession
- (ii) take into account the need to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for key sectors, including housing
- (iii) consider the range of likely economic, environmental and social benefits of proposals; including long term or indirect benefits such as increased consumer choice, more viable communities and more robust local economies (which may, where relevant, include matters such as job creation and business productivity)

- (iv) be sensitive to the fact that local economies are subject to change and so take a positive approach to development where new economic data suggest that prior assessments of needs are no longer up-to-date
- (v) Ensure that they do not impose unnecessary burdens on development.

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities are obliged to have regard to all relevant considerations. They should ensure that they give appropriate weight to the need to support economic recovery, that applications that secure sustainable growth are treated favourably (consistent with policy in PPS4), and that they can give clear reasons for their decisions.

20. The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:-

Core Strategy Policy 3 (CS3) - Sustainable Living and Climate Change

1. All new residential developments will achieve a minimum of Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes up to 2013, and thereafter a minimum of Code Level 4.
2. All new non-residential developments will be completed to a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) of 'very good' up to 2013 and thereafter a minimum rating of 'excellent'.
3. The minimum carbon reduction targets will remain in line with Part L of the Building Regulations, achieving carbon neutral domestic properties by 2016, and non domestic properties by 2019, although it is expected that developers will aspire to meet targets prior to these dates.
4. To meet carbon reduction targets, energy efficiency measures should be embedded in all new buildings. If this is not possible, or the targets are not met, then on-site district renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be used. Where it can be demonstrated that neither of these options is suitable, micro renewable, micro carbon energy technologies or a contribution towards an off-site renewable energy scheme will be considered.
5. For all major developments, including residential developments comprising 10 or more units, and non-residential developments exceeding 1000 square metres gross floor space, at least 10% of total predicted energy requirements will be provided, on site, from renewable energy sources.
6. All major development proposals will be encouraged to make use of renewable and low carbon decentralised energy systems to support the sustainable development of major growth locations within the Borough.
7. Where suitable proposals come forward for medium to small scale renewable energy generation, which meet the criteria set out in Policy 40 of the Regional Spatial Strategy, these will be supported. Broad locations for renewable energy generation may be identified in the Regeneration Development Plan Document.
8. Additionally, in designing new development, proposals will:
 - _ Make a positive contribution to the local area, by protecting and enhancing important environmental assets, biodiversity and geodiversity, responding positively to existing features of natural, historic, archaeological or local character, including hedges and trees, and including the provision of high quality public open space;
 - _ Be designed with safety in mind, incorporating Secure by Design and Park Mark standards, as appropriate;

- _ Incorporate 'long life and loose fit' buildings, allowing buildings to be adaptable to changing needs. By 2013, all new homes will be built to Lifetime Homes Standards;
- _ Seek to safeguard the diverse cultural heritage of the Borough, including buildings, features, sites and areas of national importance and local significance. Opportunities will be taken to constructively and imaginatively incorporate heritage assets in redevelopment schemes, employing where appropriate contemporary design solutions.

9. The reduction, reuse, sorting, recovery and recycling of waste will be encouraged, and details will be set out in the Joint Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents.

Core Strategy Policy 8 (CS8) - Housing Mix and Affordable Housing Provision

1. Sustainable residential communities will be created by requiring developers to provide a mix and balance of good quality housing of all types and tenure in line with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (incorporating the 2008 Local Housing Assessment update).

2. A more balanced mix of housing types will be required. In particular:

- _ Proposals for 2 and 3-bedroomed bungalows will be supported throughout the Borough;
- _ Executive housing will be supported as part of housing schemes offering a range of housing types, particularly in Eaglescliffe;
- _ In the Core Area, the focus will be on town houses and other high density properties.

3. Developers will be expected to achieve an average density range of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare in the Core Area and in other locations with good transport links. In locations with a particularly high level of public transport accessibility, such as Stockton, Billingham and Thornaby town centres, higher densities may be appropriate subject to considerations of character. In other locations such as parts of Yarm, Eaglescliffe and Norton, which are characterised by mature dwellings and large gardens, a density lower than 30 dwellings per hectare may be appropriate. Higher density development will not be appropriate in Ingleby Barwick.

4. The average annual target for the delivery of affordable housing is 100 affordable homes per year to 2016, 90 affordable homes per year for the period 2016 to 2021 and 80 affordable homes per year for the period 2021 to 2024. These targets are minimums, not ceilings.

5. Affordable housing provision within a target range of 15-20% will be required on schemes of 15 dwellings or more and on development sites of 0.5 hectares or more. Affordable housing provision at a rate lower than the standard target will only be acceptable where robust justification is provided. This must demonstrate that provision at the standard target would make the development economically unviable.

6. Off-site provision or financial contributions instead of on-site provision may be made where the Council considers that there is robust evidence that the achievement of mixed communities is better served by making provision elsewhere.

7. The mix of affordable housing to be provided will be 20% intermediate and 80% social rented tenures with a high priority accorded to the delivery of two and three bedroom houses and bungalows. Affordable housing provision with a tenure mix different from the standard target will only be acceptable where robust justification is provided. This must demonstrate either that provision at the standard target would make the development economically unviable or that the resultant tenure mix would be detrimental to the achievement of sustainable, mixed communities.

8. Where a development site is sub-divided into separate development parcels below the affordable housing threshold, the developer will be required to make a proportionate affordable housing contribution.

9. The requirement for affordable housing in the rural parts of the Borough will be identified through detailed assessments of rural housing need. The requirement will be met through the delivery of a 'rural exception' site or sites for people in identified housing need with a local connection. These homes will be affordable in perpetuity.

10. The Council will support proposals that address the requirements of vulnerable and special needs groups consistent with the spatial strategy.

11. Major planning applications for student accommodation will have to demonstrate how they will meet a proven need for the development, are compatible with wider social and economic regeneration objectives, and are conveniently located for access to the University and local facilities.

12. The Borough's existing housing stock will be renovated and improved where it is sustainable and viable to do so and the surrounding residential environment will be enhanced.

13. In consultation with local communities, options will be considered for demolition and redevelopment of obsolete and unsustainable stock that does not meet local housing need and aspirations.

Core Strategy Policy 10 (CS10) Environmental Protection and Enhancement

1. In taking forward development in the plan area, particularly along the river corridor, in the North Tees Pools and Seal Sands areas, proposals will need to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on the integrity of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA and Ramsar site, or other European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans, programmes and projects. Any proposed mitigation measures must meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations.

2. Development throughout the Borough and particularly in the Billingham, Saltholme and Seal Sands area, will be integrated with the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape.

3. The separation between settlements, together with the quality of the urban environment, will be maintained through the protection and enhancement of the openness and amenity value of:

i) Strategic gaps between the conurbation and the surrounding towns and villages, and between Eaglescliffe and Middleton St George.

ii) Green wedges within the conurbation, including:

_ River Tees Valley from Surtees Bridge, Stockton to Yarm;

_ Leven Valley between Yarm and Ingleby Barwick;

_ Bassleton Beck Valley between Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby;

_ Stainsby Beck Valley, Thornaby;

_ Billingham Beck Valley;

_ Between North Billingham and Cowpen Lane Industrial Estate.

iii) Urban open space and play space.

4. The integrity of designated sites will be protected and enhanced, and the biodiversity and geodiversity of sites of local interest improved in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, ODPM Circular 06/2005 (also known as DEFRA Circular 01/2005) and the Habitats Regulations.

5. Habitats will be created and managed in line with objectives of the Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan as part of development, and linked to existing wildlife corridors wherever possible.

6. Joint working with partners and developers will ensure the successful creation of an integrated network of green infrastructure.

7. Initiatives to improve the quality of the environment in key areas where this may contribute towards strengthening habitat networks, the robustness of designated wildlife sites, the tourism offer and biodiversity will be supported, including:

- i) Haverton Hill and Seal Sands corridor, as an important gateway to the Teesmouth National Nature Reserve and Saltholme RSPB Nature Reserve;
- ii) Tees Heritage Park.

8. The enhancement of forestry and increase of tree cover will be supported where appropriate in line with the Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

9. New development will be directed towards areas of low flood risk, that is Flood Zone 1, as identified by the Borough's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). In considering sites elsewhere, the sequential and exceptions tests will be applied, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, and applicants will be expected to carry out a flood risk assessment.

10. When redevelopment of previously developed land is proposed, assessments will be required to establish:

- _ the risks associated with previous contaminative uses;
- _ the biodiversity and geological conservation value; and
- _ the advantages of bringing land back into more beneficial use.

Local Plan Saved Policy

Policy HO3

Within the limits of development, residential development may be permitted provided that:

- (i) The land is not specifically allocated for another use; and
- (ii) The land is not underneath electricity lines; and
- (iii) It does not result in the loss of a site which is used for recreational purposes; and
- (iv) It is sympathetic to the character of the locality and takes account of and accommodates important features within the site; and
- (v) It does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent land users; and
- (vi) Satisfactory arrangements can be made for access and parking.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 21. The property is located in the settlement of Thornaby in a residential area of estate roads characterised by terraced and semi-detached buildings. The property is on the corner of a junction of two roads with the front elevation angled so as to face the apex of the corner. Redcar Road and Ayton Road form the southern and western boundaries respectively. The rear garden of the semi-detached No.1 Ayton Road forms the northern boundary and the end terraced house No.31 Redcar Road forms the eastern boundary.
- 22. The building is currently vacant and the windows and doors have been secured against unauthorised entry. The main part of the building is about the same size as a pair of semi-detached houses and has similar appearance and materials to the surrounding semi-detached and terraced houses. However there is an additional extension along 2/3rds of the rear that was used as a back office. There is a disabled access ramp up to the doors on the front and western end of the building.
- 23. Externally there is a large tarmac forecourt surrounded by a low red brick wall except for vehicular and pedestrian entrances around both road frontages. The land to the rear of the building is closed off by fencing to approximately 1.8m in height. The side gardens of neighbouring houses adjoining the site are timber fenced at the rear and side to 1.8m and 1m high approximately where they come forward towards the road.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

24. The main planning considerations are the principle of the development, the impact on the appearance and character of the area, the impact on residential amenity and privacy, highway safety, nature conservation and other material considerations.
- 25. Principle of the development**
26. The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Thornaby as defined for the purposes of the Saved Local Plan policies. The land is occupied by an existing building and its curtilage which was formerly a housing office for the local area. The site is therefore previously developed land for the purposes of Government advice in PPS3: 'Housing' and within the defined settlement boundary where the conversion of buildings to residential uses can be considered. There are no specific planning policies or Government advice that a change of use to residential would conflict with in principle. The site is in a predominantly residential area and an alternative residential use can be considered.
27. The children's home would have 5 bedrooms. One of these would be for a member of staff and another is shown as being a spare. The number of children living in the premises is not expected to be any more than 4 at anyone time. The number of bedrooms would be greater than that of the individual houses in the surrounding area, unless they have been extended, but not necessarily any more occupants than some of the surrounding houses. The number of bedrooms reflects the size of the building which is equivalent to a pair of semi-detached houses.
28. The intention is that Stockton Borough Council will run the home, as an addition to the 4 Children's homes in the borough that it currently runs. The supporting evidence states that the Council has "decided against tendering this to private companies in view of the excellent track record of its current homes and the positive outcomes for the children living there." "There will be a registered manager for the home who has to be suitably qualified and experience and agreed by OFSTED." "All private homes and Local authority homes are regulated and inspected twice yearly by OFSTED against national minimum standards and are also required to have monthly visits by an independent person to ensure that standards are maintained. OFSTED receive copies of these visits In Stockton we also invite local councillors to undertake these visits alongside the independent person and will be doing so in this home."
29. The supporting evidence states that there would be 2 staff on duty at all times and a member of staff sleeping over. "A small staff team will be in place and they will cover shifts over a 24 hour period. This will create stability for the children rather than lots of changes of staff." "Staff will have the same controls as any family in terms of rewarding good behaviour and sanctioning bad behaviour. Children can be grounded or treats withheld."
30. The children would be boys and girls who have been placed in care and come from all backgrounds and who have suffered significant harm. The age range would be from 11 up to 18 with no more than 3 years difference between the oldest and youngest. The supporting evidence states that: "The home will take children who cannot return home to parents and they will stay on a long term basis." "The main reason for children being in care is as a result of neglect or abuse by their family. They do not come into care because of offending. Our offending rate for looked after children is very low and out of 300 children looked after only 8 have committed offences. 3 of these children live outside the area."

31. The former back office would be used for education for those children in care who cannot attend school, or who are waiting for a school to be identified. "The home will be visited by social workers for the children, their family and friends will visit and also the Manager with oversight for all the homes."
32. 10 letters of objection have also been received. These are principally concerned with the amount of anti-social behaviour in the area and that it could be increased and that Thornaby has enough problems already. There is concern that the change of use would have an adverse effect on the re-generation of the area and that house prices would be affected and people would not buy. The price of housing is not a planning consideration. A petition with 113 signatories has also been received which states "We the undersigned are totally against the former housing office Redcar Road, Thornaby being converted into a children's home of any kind." More specific reasons for the objection are not given.
33. The intention is that this home would not be privately run and the controls over the children and the responsibilities of the Council in running the home are as stated in the supporting documentation. The opinion has been given that there is more need for social housing than a 4 bed home, but the current application is that under consideration. Other concerns including vehicle noise and privacy are considered below.
34. Core Strategy policy CS8 says at paragraph 10 that "The Council will support proposals that address the requirements of vulnerable and special needs groups consistent with the spatial strategy." The site is in a residential housing area and the proposal is for a residential use for children who are in need of care. In policy terms the proposed residential use would be compatible to the surrounding development subject to detailed consideration of planning policy criteria.
35. Core Strategy policy CS10 states that when redevelopment of previously developed land is proposed, assessments will be required to establish the advantages of bringing land back into more beneficial use. The building is currently vacant and boarded up and the proposed residential use would be beneficial to the wider community.
36. Local Plan Saved Policy HO3 permits residential development within the limits of development subject to a number of criteria. The site is not specifically allocated for another use, it is not underneath electricity lines and it does not result in the loss of a site which is used for recreational purposes. The development must be sympathetic to the character of the locality and take account of and accommodates important features within the site or result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent land users and it must make satisfactory arrangements for access and parking. These matters are considered below.
37. The proposal would bring back a building into a worthwhile use and is acceptable in principle and subject to the consideration of the details of the scheme it would be in accordance with Core Strategy policies CS3, CS8 and CS10 and Stockton on Tees Local Plan Saved Policies HO3.
- 38. Impact on the appearance and character of the area**
39. The main part of the building has design features and materials that are the same as the surrounding terraced houses and it is approximately the same size as a pair of semi-detached houses would be on the site. The rear extension is of a slightly different character but is largely hidden from street view by the main building. The conversion would involve alterations to the building but the main structure would be retained as it is.
40. The alterations would involve some internal changes to the layout to subdivide rooms to create bedrooms and access routes and also closing up of some door openings. Externally

one of the entrance doors would be closed up on the front elevation, two windows would be closed up on the western side elevation and another closed up at first floor on the rear elevation. A window on the rear would become a back door and a window for an office would be opened up on the rear ground floor. Other existing window openings would have new windows fitted and new Tyrolean rendering would be applied to the walls.

41. Core Strategy policy CS10 states that when redevelopment of previously developed land is proposed the advantages of bringing land back into more beneficial use will be considered. The proposed changes to close up surplus windows and doors and create a new back door and window would rationalise these openings and give an improved appearance which was even more like a pair of semi-detached houses.
42. The existing extensive tarmac car park to the front of the building would be laid to grass and the large vehicular access closed up to a pedestrian gate width only. Details of the wrought iron gate have been provided. Paved footpaths would be formed around the building and leading to the gate. A 1.8m high timber fence would be erected to close off access to either side of the building to form a private rear garden. These changes would improve the appearance of the property on this openly visible corner plot and also make it look more like a residential property.
43. The Environmental Health Officer does not have an objection in principle to the development, but has recommended a condition in case of unexpected land contamination. This is a precautionary measure in anything is revealed by the removal of the tarmac forecourt. Core Strategy policy CS10 states that when redevelopment of previously developed land is proposed, assessments will be required to establish the risks associated with previous contaminative uses.
44. It is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and that the scheme would be in accordance with Core Strategy policies CS3, CS8 and CS10 and Stockton on Tees Local Plan Saved Policies HO3.
- 45. Impact on residential amenity and privacy**
46. The proposed conversion to a home would have the main elevation windows facing the roadway junction of the roads. The nearest houses would be 22m on the other side of Ayton Road and facing houses in Redcar Road are some 29m distant. The neighbouring properties on either side are within 4m for Redcar Road and 8m for Ayton Road. These houses and gardens are separated by close boarded timber fences and tree planting and partly by a conifer hedge.
47. Local Plan Saved Policy HO3 allows residential development that does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent land users. Core Strategy policy CS3 allows development that will be designed with safety in mind, incorporating Secure by Design and Park Mark standards, as appropriate.
48. The individual writers have raised concerns about the anti-social behaviour in the area and that this would be added to by the children in the home who may have behavioural problems. The submitted petition with 113 signatories does not give the specific reasons the signatories are against the conversion into a children's home.
49. There has been a specific objection concerning the rear elevation of the above premises, particularly the first floor, overlooking the rear garden of a neighbour, thus "severely compromising" privacy. There are no windows on the rear elevation of the former back office part of the building as this has a blank rear elevation facing the neighbouring gardens. There are currently three windows on the rear elevation of the longer main part of

the building serving a former office, shower room and wc. The proposals show that the shower room window would be closed up leaving one to serve a combined shower and wc room. This would need to be obscure glazed. The third window serving an office would provide light to a corridor serving the upper bedrooms. This would not be a principle living room for the home and the overlooking would be no worse than exists at present.

50. A back door would be formed by opening up a ground floor window and another window added at ground floor level on the rear. Due to the height of boundary fences and trees this new access would have little impact on surrounding privacy and amenity. The windows on the gable ends would remain. Because of the orientation of the building across the corner of the road junction these windows face the roads and the gables of the houses on either side rather than any rear garden. These side windows would become bedroom windows and were last used as offices. As no additional windows would be added it is not considered that there would be a significantly greater degree of overlooking.
51. Another concern raised by an objector is that the residential area will suffer negatively from noise pollution from deliveries to and from the home and from parking for staff and or visitors. The existing building functioned as a neighbourhood housing office and with its extensive office space and reception areas for meeting the public. The proposals show that there would be two members of staff at any one time with additional support provided by officers and other professionals as necessary. The number of staff is therefore much lower than the potential that the existing use of the building would have with the consequent lower number of vehicle movements. There is a large car park to the front of the building which would serve both staff and visiting members of the public which would be done away with. Car parking would be limited to 3 spaces and any large service vehicles if expected at all would have to use the public highway. The property is on the junction of two roads and therefore subject to the noise generated by moving traffic anyway so that there is likely to be a reduction in possible noise by the proposal.
52. The Environmental Health Officer is concerned that construction noise in the evenings or at weekends and Bank Holidays would have an adverse impact on residential amenity. Therefore a condition is proposed to limit the construction operations including delivery of materials on site.
53. It is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on adjoining land uses and residential amenity and privacy and the proposals are in accordance with Core Strategy policies CS1, CS3 and CS10 and Stockton on Tees Local Plan Saved Policies EN4, EN7, EN13 and HO1.
- 54. Highway Safety**
55. Local Plan Saved Policy HO3 allows residential development that makes satisfactory arrangements for access and parking. The applicant states that the number of staff will be two at all times and there is a staff bedroom. In addition there will be additional staff and professional visitors.
56. An amended plan has been requested and is being prepared to show 3 incurtilage car parking spaces as requested by the Head of Technical Services. Subject to confirmation from the Head of Technical Services on the revised parking layout there are not expected to be any highway objections.
57. It is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highway safety and that the scheme would be in accordance with Core Strategy policies CS3, CS8 and CS10 and Stockton on Tees Local Plan Saved Policies HO3.

58. Human Rights Implications

59. The aim of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 is to give people who live in European states a list of civil and political rights which the member states of the Council of Europe believed every person in Europe should expect to have. The proposed development would not contravene the basic rights and freedoms which are set down in the Convention.

60. Community Safety Implications

61. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the authority to consider the crime and disorder implications of the proposal. Policy CS3 requires that development be designed with safety in mind, incorporating Secure by Design and Park Mark standards, as appropriate.

62. The development would be within a residential area and on the corner of a road junction where it is open to view from numerous overlooking houses and those using the public road. Movements to and from the home would therefore be open to public surveillance and scrutiny. The house would have a fenced off and gated rear garden for private use by residents, staff and their visitors.

63. The provisions of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have therefore been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

CONCLUSION

64. The application is for the conversion of the vacant neighbourhood housing office to a home for children run by the Council. The building is on a residential housing estate within the settlement of Thornaby and is previously developed land. The changes to the building allow the proposed use and improve its appearance without significantly altering its character. It is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highway safety and that the scheme would be in accordance with Core Strategy policies CS3, CS8 and CS10 and Stockton on Tees Local Plan Saved Policies EN4, EN7, EN13 and HO1, HO3.

65. Therefore it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan and the application is therefore recommended for approval.

**Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer Mr Andrew Bishop Telephone No 01642 527310**

WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

**Ward Mandale and Victoria
Ward Councillor Councillor S F Walmsley**

**Ward Mandale and Victoria
Ward Councillor Councillor T Large**

**Ward Mandale and Victoria
Ward Councillor Councillor Tracey Stott**

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications:

None

Environmental Implications:

As Report

Human Rights Implications:

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Community Safety Implications:

The provisions of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report

Background Papers

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2: Householder Extension Guide February 2004.

Supplementary Planning Document Note 3: Parking Provision for New Developments November 2006.

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