
From: V Krywonos
Sent: 24 August 2022 23:19
To:

Subject: Ref:CD1/0722/11/ CON/2022/0017

Categories:

24 August 2022

Attention:

Hannah Hollins (High Peak Borough Council)

Amy Charlesworth (Derbyshire County Council)

Chris Henning, Executive Director of Place, on behalf of the Applicant, Derbyshire County Council

Planning Application Code No. CD1/0722/11

High Peak Reference CON/2022/0017

Proposed Development at 2 Compton Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 9DN (the “Subject Property”) for a change of use from a guest house (C1) to a children’s home (C2)

Dear Ms Hollins and Ms Charlesworth, We object to the proposed planning application submitted by Derbyshire County Council to change the use of the Subject Property into a children’s home for the reasons set out below.

We operate a successful business on Green Lane which is within the quiet residential conservation area; our property directly faces 2 Compton Road. In our area, there are several guest houses, a well run nursery and many charming residential properties. Currently, our community flourishes and benefits from the quiet, well-presented area; residents demonstrate on a daily basis their support for the conservation status and there is a quiet shared understanding that living in this area comes with responsibility for protecting the precious historical nature of the area for future generations. We are very fortunate and privileged to live and work in such a beautiful and well-cared for area surrounded by like-minded people.

This unique area of Buxton has helped build our business; our historic building is centrally located, yet exists within a leafy conservation area-it is one of the first reasons visitors choose to stay with us. Our property is within walking distance of the Opera House and Pavilion Gardens, and is also very close to the town centre. Guests enjoy our quality accommodation and beautifully restored Victorian building. We have invested heavily in our business and as such are able to charge above average rates. Many choose us because we are a vegan/ vegetarian establishment too. Recently, we won an award- Trip Advisor’s Travellers Choice Award- and have bookings for 12 months and beyond. Our business model works well, and enjoys good links with other commercial ventures operating in the area. The growth of our business certainly supports High Peak’s own Growth Strategy (2017), and is a great example of something that represents high quality that respects the natural environment. In its own small way, our guest house enhances the visitor economy and reinforces the identity of the High Peak, and is a venture we wish to protect and grow.

Concern 1: Noise and Disturbance

It concerns us that the quiet nature of this area may change significantly if the proposed development at 2 Compton Road is allowed to go ahead. This in turn will undoubtedly affect our business.

Guests who choose to stay with us often refer to the quiet yet central nature of our property. We benefit from repeat bookings from home and international guests who often use their stay with us as either a base from which to explore the area (walking the Monsal Trail, visiting Chatsworth House etc), or as an overnight stay after experiencing a show at the nearby Opera House. We benefit from guests who wish to also use their stay as part of work; often guests work in their rooms and particularly enjoy the calm and quiet nature of our property. Yesterday, three guests explained to me at breakfast that all three of them were traders/bankers (two from Singapore and one from London), and thanked us for having such great internet access and spacious rooms which had enabled one of them to work until 11pm, and another to work until 3am. Their combining of travel with work is not unusual. In the last two weeks alone, we have enjoyed conversations with guests from London, Texas, the Philippines, Belgium, France, Germany, Australia, Dubai many of whom have requested quiet spaces so they can catch up on work. Our concern is that if a children's home with, as DCC itself describes, "children and young adults with emotional and behavioural difficulties", is developed at 2 Compton Road, it is bound to create significant noise and, potentially, nuisance to guests and residents in our area. We are worried that the peaceful nature of this area, which our business heavily depends on, will be adversely affected.

Concern 2: Lack of Parking

Griff House does not have many suitable parking spaces. Unlike nearby guest house 9 Green lane, and our Guest House, Griff House has little/ no garden and very little land to use for safe parking. We anticipate that if Griff House were changed to a Children's Home then regular staff would need to use local street parking, and any visitors to the Children's Home the same. Thus, this would impact the street parking of Green Lane and Compton Road which is already under significant pressure especially as it supports a nearby Driving Test Centre too.

It may be worth evaluating the space to the side of Griff House with regards to the parking of multiple vehicles; it may be tricky to maintain safe access to and from the dwelling if a number of vehicles are parked in that area.

It may also be worth considering the seasonal nature of a Bed and Breakfast against the all-year use of a property as a Children's Home. Occupancy rates vary across seasons, and as such, there are accepted high season linked periods when deliveries/ visitors and traffic is increased. Residents accept this as part of the nature of the area, and positive indication of buoyant tourism it is linked with. Tourism is regarded as a positive ingredient by residents, who as a consequence benefit from increased employment opportunities (directly and indirectly related) as well as an increase in the quality and range of services/ associated commerce.

Notes related to this planning application indicate that potentially 7 members of staff would be present on site. This indicates that there will be some very vulnerable children on this site. At least one manager is typically on site during standard working hours through the week in a Children's home. It is our understanding that some children in care are required to have one-to-one supervision whilst others require two-to-one supervision. It is reasonable to infer that the more intensive supervision a child requires the more complex their emotional or behavioural difficulties will be to necessitate a placement. Griff House has six bedrooms. This indicates that provision will be for children with possible quite complex needs. No mention is made of expected additional visitors in the application nor reference to the additional traffic this would create. Children's homes are subject to unannounced inspection visits from Ofsted and LA Quality and Safety Officers, Social workers and other specialists. The children may also require transport to and from their places of education. The children may require other support workers to visit the home on a daily basis too.

To suggest only 7 additional cars may be coming and going each day is wholly unrealistic. There is no mention either of the 24 hour shift patterns that will be needed to support such an establishment. For the complexity of needs that would need to be met, it is common for individual children to require 4:1/ 2:1/ 1:1 staffing; there will certainly be far more traffic in the area as a result than currently is. This additional traffic will be all-year round, and potentially very early in the morning, throughout the day, and late at night.

Concern 3: Lack of Suitable Outdoor Space

An additional concern relates to the lack of outdoor space to support the children; there is minimal outdoor space for what is potentially needed for up to 6 children with additional need. The health benefits of outdoor space for young people and children cannot be underestimated. When indoors, children's senses are more limited to sight and sound but when outside, aside from being stimulated by the beauty of nature, they can feel the sun (or cold air) on their skin. Having space to play outdoors supports well being and development.

Teenagers also need private outdoor spaces to enjoy either alone or with their friends. Often it is overlooked that for young people outdoor spaces offer opportunities for social integration and acceptance, peer gatherings, and if in their home environment a general sense of safety and freedom of movement Griff House does not offer this provision, and to suggest that the children can play outside whilst at school, or at a local park, misses this point entirely.

To not have sufficient outdoor space may lead to social exclusion and stigma, boredom and an increase in any negative behaviours. Some research even points to an increase in vandalism and public disorder if young people are not afforded the positive opportunities to meet in a safe and private environment with their peers.

Concern 4: Unsuitable location/ Safeguarding Concerns

The location of Griff House is wholly unsuitable as multiple hazards are close by: it is adjacent to two busy roads and within 100m of multiple main roads. Guidance for Children's Homes states consideration needs to take into account, 'environmental factors that would represent a hazard to children, such as locations near level crossings or busy roads.'

The location of Griff House will increase the risk of the children coming to harm should they 'run off' make it difficult for staff to control their movements and keep them safe.

Griff House is close to many public houses too (100m from London Road Inn, 200m The Cheshire Cheese Pub, The Old Sun Inn, and The Swan... to name a few.) We are surprised that a pre-opening local assessment, with consideration for the guidance issued by Ofsted, has not highlighted these two issues and all associated risks.

Concern 5: Impact on local residents and businesses

It is widely recognised the significant impact having a Children's Home can have on a surrounding community. Frequently applications are refused by councils in England because it is understood that the number of staff and the effects of comings and goings from the property and the type of children having potential emotional and behavioural issues can result in disturbances to surrounding neighbours.

Please refer to the following applications which were refused by council across England on this basis alone:

Mansfield District Council: In 2019, an application for a certificate of lawful proposed use for a change of use of a dwelling house to small scale home for children at Willow House, 11 Mansfield Road, Clipstone was refused.(Ref:2019/0264/CLPD)



An application for Change Of Use To Provide 24hr Care For 6/7 Young Persons Aged 12yrs Plus (Ref:CPT/364/10/FUL) was refused by Castle Point County Council



Even a local MP at the time supported residents concerns and noted the following in a letter to the Planning Service of Castle Point County Council:



Conclusion

The DCC made the following statement: “The Council thinks that the development would affect the character or appearance of a conservation area which the land to which the application relates is in” (Letter dated 4 August 2022)

It is easy to understand how they came to this conclusion. Undoubtedly, if the proposal goes ahead, the following will develop:

- increased parking issues, higher volumes of traffic and associated increased risks for pedestrians and motorists
- higher risk of antisocial behaviours
- increased levels of noise and disturbance
- increased risk of property damage

Thus, we strongly agree that the proposed change of use requested in the application will change the character of the conservation area.

It is essential that children, especially those with increased need, are placed in suitable and safe environments, and environments that are well supported. To choose a location primarily based on cost is not best practice. Griff House provides little outdoor space, is in a busy location, affords little privacy and is on a busy road. It is also very near several public houses, a busy commercial zone and multiple fast food outlets and a very busy 5-way crossing which heavy lorries use. It is certainly not a good location for a children's home. Vulnerable children deserve better.

To conclude, we consider the proposal to change Griff House into a Children's Home for children with potentially complex needs has not been considered well: the management of the home does not seem to take into account the complexity of children and young people and the associated risks, particularly security related, nor does the proposal reflect the needs of the Local Area for residential and business provision.

Thank you for considering our objection. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Dr W and V Krywonos

(Owners Kingscroft, 10 Green Lane, Buxton)