

BOLTON METRO

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

PLANNING CONTROL POLICY NOTE No 12

Residential and Nursing Homes for the Elderly

Introduction

1. This Planning Control Policy Note provides guidance on residential and nursing homes for the elderly. It covers both the development of new schemes and proposals for the changes of use of existing buildings. Most applications for residential homes for the elderly received by the Council tend to be for the change of use of existing buildings rather than new-build schemes.

Policy

2. For planning purposes residential homes for the elderly may fall into one of two use classes. Class C2 'Residential institutions' is a use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use falling within Class C3, see Below), or a nursing home. Class C3 'Dwellinghouses' includes situations where care is provided for not more than 6 residents.
3. There is a distinction between a 'residential home for the elderly' and a 'nursing home' though both are in the same use class. Nursing homes are registered with and are controlled by Bolton Health Authority. The type of care and level of staff cover provided in such homes is important. Residential homes for the elderly are registered by the Council's Social Services Committee. No certificate of Registration is granted until planning permission and all forms of consent are first obtained. Further information can be found in the Registered Homes Act 1984.
4. Applicants are strongly recommended to contact and discuss their proposals before submitting an application with:
 - (a) the Council's Environment Department:
 - (i) Building Control Section - to discuss the requirements for building regulations approval which may involve making a separate application; and also fire escapes and potential fire hazards;
 - (ii) Engineering Division - to discuss vehicular access and servicing;
 - (iii) Environmental Health Services - to discuss potential sound insulation, sanitary and food hygiene standards, etc.

- (b) Social Services Department - to discuss registration, suitable room sizes, number of residents etc.

Advice

Suitable locations

5. Sites suitable for residential homes for the elderly should have good access to public transport and other amenities. Locations away from local shops and public transport are not necessarily acceptable, but they may prove less attractive to residents. These sites may require additional car parking provision should it be considered that residents, visitors and staff are more likely to have to be car drivers.
6. New developments or change of use of existing buildings will not be acceptable if it is likely to result in an unacceptable level of traffic or a detrimental change to the visual character of the area, or detract from the amenities enjoyed by nearby residents.
7. The opening of a home for the elderly need not have a detrimental effect upon the character of the residential area. Such a facility however can cause problems of increased traffic on quiet residential roads, and on-street parking. Access, servicing and car parking are further considered in other sections.
8. The interaction of such a facility can also affect the visual amenities of the neighbourhood due to design details and the display of advertisements. All proposed schemes should be residential in character and complementary to the character of the neighbourhood.
9. External fire escapes may require planning permission. It is recommended that applicants submit details for consideration together with their application for planning permission. Fire escapes should be positioned unobtrusively whilst still fulfilling their function. External fire escapes in prominent public positions will not be acceptable.

Types of property suitable for conversion

10. Suitable properties are those which satisfy the criteria for noise control, parking and open space provision.
11. Large detached properties often make the most suitable properties for conversion. Detached properties generally have more land around for car parking, servicing and garden areas and do not face the problem of noise transmittance from adjoining properties. Notwithstanding this, small semi-detached or terraced properties can also successfully be converted to homes for the elderly provided provisions for noise control, car parking and open space

provisions are satisfied. Indeed smaller homes for the elderly can create a more intimate and possibly less institutional atmosphere than larger run homes.

12. Any necessary external changes to premises in conversion should be compatible with the overall external appearance of the building.
13. With regard to noise control, proposals should satisfy the policies in the Planning Control Policy Note on Noise (no.5).
14. The criteria for car parking and open space provision relating to homes for the elderly and nursing homes are further discussed under subsequent headings and in Planning Control Policy Notes on Car Parking Standards and Space About Dwellings (nos. 1 and 2).

Extensions

15. Extensions to existing homes should fit in with the character of the original building and should allow sufficient land around to meet additional car parking and open space requirements.
16. In the case of extensions, these should be designed to fit in with the main building. Extensions will also be subject to other planning controls to minimise the effect on adjoining properties.

Relationship with nearby and adjoining buildings

17. In all properties including detached ones the internal arrangement of rooms and the use of garden areas where properties are in close proximity should be such as to minimise disturbance to neighbours and protect residents in the home from disturbance from other properties.
18. Homes for the elderly tend not to be noisy uses but internal arrangement can result in unacceptable uses sharing party walls with neighbouring properties. It is normally unacceptable for a kitchen, lounge, living or dining room in a home for the elderly to share a party wall with noise sensitive rooms in adjoining properties. Likewise it is normally unacceptable for bedrooms in a homes for the elderly to share party walls with living/dining room or kitchen in adjoining properties. The Council is concerned that the provision of residential homes for the elderly is not at the expense of amenities enjoyed by neighbours who should be protected from undue noise. Particular regard must be given where a self contained flat is created for the owner (and family) of a home for the elderly.
19. Although there is a problem of noise transmittance through the walls of detached properties, care should still be taken in the internal arrangement of rooms where properties are close to one another.
20. With regard to semi-detached and terraced properties the relationship between rooms in the Home and the adjoining property(ies) is very important. In such cases the proposed conversions should satisfy the policies in the Planning

Control Policy Note on Noise Control (no. 5). Wherever possible 'like' rooms should be positioned on either side of a party wall between homes and adjacent property(ies). It is for the applicant to provide necessary information on sound insulation requirement. The view of the Borough Environmental Health Officer will be sought where a potential noise problem may exist and applicants will be expected to meet any sound insulation requirements.

Open space provision

21. Residential homes for the elderly should have a reasonable area of private open space. A separate private open space should be provided where residential accommodation is included within the proposal.
22. New-build schemes and conversions should make provision for communal open space for the residents to allow them to take advantage of good weather. They should also ensure that the open space is accessible to people in wheelchairs. The actual size of the open space is dependent on the individual circumstances of the home but should be sufficient to meet the general day to day needs of the residents together with visitors. Each proposal will be considered on its merits and notice will be taken of any special circumstances that may dictate that a larger or smaller areas are required.
23. Open space may take the form of garden, sitting area or patio, and should be separated from car parking and servicing areas. The Council recognises that residents at homes often choose to sit in more public locations where there is greater interest and activity. However areas of open space must have the potential for privacy and those in prominent public locations, such as front gardens facing onto busy main road, will not be acceptable in isolation. Where this is the case, then the ancillary provision of a conservatory or enclosed seating area, may be sufficient to offset the need for a more private area.
24. Where a self-contained flat is created for the owner (and family) a separate truly private open space should be provided according to Council's standards as set out in the Planning Control Policy Note entitled Space about Dwellings (no. 2).

Access and service requirements

25. Homes for the elderly must provide adequate vehicular access to the site. Access arrangements should enable all vehicles entering or leaving the site to do so in a safe manner. The introduction of a home for the elderly should not be detrimental to the safety of road users or the amenities of residents in the neighbourhood.
26. In the case of homes for elderly with vehicular access onto busy, well used roads, sufficient vehicular access width and space within the site to enable cars and service vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear should be provided. This requires the provision of a turning facility or a separate entry and exist facility within the curtilage of the home.

27. In the case of homes for the elderly on other roads under certain circumstances on-street servicing may be acceptable. This will depend on the size of the Home and on the type of level of use of the road on which the home is situated. Roads should at least have sufficient carriageway width to accommodate two-way traffic together with on-street parking. Regard will also be given to the home's siting in relation to road junctions and the existence of on-street parking restrictions. Homes on private roads or drives may fall within this category.
28. Proposals will be expected to include adequate means of access into a home to cater for the needs of disabled people. In the case of new-build schemes this may also be a requirement under Building Regulations.
29. Outside work areas such as dustbin storage and clothes drying areas should be positioned away from areas of private open space so as to safeguard neighbouring properties and the inhabitable rooms of the home from excessive noise, smell and general disturbance.
30. Careful attention should be paid to the positioning of work areas so as to safeguard neighbours and residents at the home from excessive disturbance. Shared work areas and areas of open space are not acceptable. Whenever possible dustbins should be contained within purpose built shelters, especially where located in prominent public locations.

Car parking

31. A change of use or a new-build proposal will not be acceptable unless on-site car parking facilities are provided. Car parking provision should meet the standards set out in the Council's Planning Control Policy Note on Car Parking Standards (no. 1).
32. The change of use to a home for the elderly is likely to result in increased traffic generation to and from the property. Naturally the same will apply to new-build schemes. Accordingly on site car parking provision is essential in order to accommodate this potential increase and to prevent excessive on-street parking which may represent a traffic hazard or create disturbance to nearby residents.
33. The total car parking provision must meet the requirement for the maximum number of staff at the home for any one shift.
34. Car parking areas should not be located in prominent public locations. Where this is not possible, then prominently located car parking areas may be acceptable if adequate landscaping and screening measures are undertaken.
35. Fractions in calculating car park requirements should be rounded to the nearest whole number. Half numbers are rounded up.

Advertisements

36. The Authority will control the display of advertisements considering the size, location and type of display required in relation to the home, and with regard to the effect on the local area and nearby properties.
37. The display of certain types of advertisement will require the consent of the Council under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations. Applicants are advised to refer to the Council's Planning Control Policy Note on Display of Signs and Advertisements (no. 6).

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