



**COMMITTEE DATE** 14 November 2018      **WARD** Selston

**APP REF** V/2018/0396

**APPLICANT** Wren Hall Nursing Home Ltd

**PROPOSAL** Extension to Rear of Existing Care Home and Change of Use from Residential Curtilage and Equestrian to Create Additional Car Parking to the North West of the Site in Association with the Care Home, and Construction of Steps from the Care Home to the Car Park Area

**LOCATION** Wren Hall Nursing Home, 234 Nottingham Road, Selston, Nottingham, NG16 6AB

**WEB-LINK** <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@53.068756,-1.2954645,18z>

**BACKGROUND PAPERS** A, B, C, D, G, K

App Registered: 26/06/2018

Expiry Date: 20/08/2018

*Consideration has been given to the Equalities Act 2010 in processing this application.*

*This application has been referred to Planning Committee by Cllr. Wilson on the grounds of Green Belt implications.*

### **The Application**

This is an application for the creation of a two storey extension to the rear of the existing care home, in addition to the change of use of the land adjacent to the north west of the care home from residential curtilage and equestrian, to create additional car parking in association with the care home, and the construction of steps from the care home to the car park area.

### **Consultations**

Site Notices have been posted together with individual notification of surrounding residents.

The following consultation responses have been received:

***Resident Comments:***

Two resident consultation periods have been carried out as part of this application, due to a necessary change in description part way through the application process.

***First Consultation:***

10x letters of objection received from residents in respect of the following:

- Development in the Green Belt
- Removal of trees
- Impact on wildlife
- Traffic on Nottingham Road & safety of access
- Appropriate access for emergency vehicles
- Overlooking & loss of privacy
- Noise from care home & car park
- Increased flooding
- Impact on local amenities (GP's etc.)
- Devaluing property

1x letter of support received from a resident in respect of the following:

- Outstanding nursing home and care provide
- Required due to ageing population
- Plans in line with best social care practice

***Second Consultation:***

10x letters of objection received from residents in respect of the following:

- As per first consultation and;
- Appropriate brownfield land elsewhere
- Continue to do works without planning permission
- Loss of views

29x letters of support received from residents and care associations/charities in respect of the following:

- As per first consultation and;
- Much needed addition to the care home
- Demand for more single occupancy rooms
- Provide employment and training opportunities
- Refusal would result in a loss of jobs
- Demand for specialist dementia care
- Excellence should be encouraged and promoted
- Extension would have a local, regional and national impact on dementia care
- Children's day nursery needed to allow parents to work at the home
- Supports the wider local economy – spends over £1m per year with local businesses

177 signatures of support on a local petition supporting the planning application

***Ashfield District Council Planning Policy:***

Comments have been provided by the Council's policy team. These comments are outlined throughout the report.

***Ashfield District Council Environmental Health:***

The use of the car park, particularly by commercial vehicles is likely to cause disturbance to neighbouring residents.

***Selston Parish Council:***

Support the application in accordance with Part 15 (Housing Types) of the JUS-t Neighbourhood Plan 2017 which states that housing development should reflect the need for a mix of housing types that meet the specific requirements of the local community. The JUS-t neighbourhood area has a higher proportion of people aged over 65 (19.6%) than the district average of 17%, and evidence in the SHMA (2015) shows that the proportion of the population in the District over 65 will be 53% by 2033. The plan area contains 3 care homes, one of which is Wren Hall, which provides day care and assisted living for the elderly and dementia sufferers, and is a large employer with 121 members of staff, the proposal will also offer employment for a further 9 more people. Given the analysis of housing stock and local demographics, it is likely there will be an increasing demand for this sort of provision.

***Nottingham County Council Highways:***

The proposal seeks permission to extend the existing care home by 20 bedrooms which falls below the threshold for requiring a formal Traffic Impact Assessment. The number of parking spaces proposed to be provided as part of the scheme is considered appropriate. The proposed car park will be accessed via an existing domestic vehicular access, and appropriate visibility splays have been provided. The access is however served from a classified road carrying a daily average of 8,650 vehicles per day. There is therefore a risk of vehicular conflict occurring at the entrance to the site, to the detriment of the safety of other highway users.

***Nottingham County Council Sustainability and Transformation Partnership:***

The county councils strategy is to support local communities to be able to live as independently as possible. Having appropriate housing options such as nursing homes is vital to supporting people to retain their independence and links with their local communities.

***Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust:***

***First Consultation:***

No ecological information has been submitted, however the removal of trees is planned which could impact on roosting bats and breeding birds, should they be present. Request a Preliminary Roost Assessment is provided. The replacement planting that is proposed is acceptable, as it includes species.

*Second Consultation:*

Satisfied with the methodology and conclusions drawn in the Preliminary Roost Assessment that there were no bat roosts recorded and the trees proposed to be removed were assessed as having a negligible or low potential for roosting

**Policy**

Having regard to Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the main policy considerations are as follows:

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018:**

- Part 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy
- Part 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
- Part 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places
- Part 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Part 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

**Ashfield Local Plan Review (ALPR) 2002:**

- ST1 – Development
- ST4 – Remainder of the District
- EV1 – Green Belt
- EV8 – Trees and Woodland
- HG8 – Residential Care Facilities, Houses in Multiple Occupation, Bedsits, Flats and Hostels

**JUS-t Neighbourhood Plan 2017**

- NP1 – Sustainable Development
- NP2 – Design Principles
- NP4 – Housing Types
- NP9 – Supporting Local Businesses

**Relevant Planning History**

**V/2018/0021** – Change of use of existing dwelling to care home (D1) and day nursery (D1) for use by members of the public – Conditional Consent 18/05/18

**V/2017/0653** – Extension to rear of existing care home and additional car parking to the north west of the site – Withdrawn

**V/2013/0615** – Replacement of and extension to existing decking area – Conditional Consent 13/01/14

**V/2010/0273** – Extensions and alterations to existing care home to include ancillary day care center – Conditional Consent 13/07/10

**V/2006/0669** – Renewal of permission for two-storey extension to nursing home and new garage – Conditional Consent 07/09/06

**V/2002/0543** – Ten bedroom unit – Conditional Consent 01/09/02

**V/2001/0417** – Two storey extension to nursing home and garage – Conditional Consent 23/07/01

**V/2001/0355** – Change of use from doctors consulting room and surgery to residential accommodation - Conditional Consent 15/06/01

**V/1998/0231** – Extensions and alterations – Conditional Consent 05/06/98

**V/1997/0124** – Double Garage – Conditional Consent 08/05/97

**V/1996/0146** – Extension to nursing home – Conditional Consent 02/05/96

**V/1995/0662** – Dayroom/dining room extension and re-siting of conservatory and additional car park – Refused 1995/0662

**V/1995/0507** – Extension to nursing home (8 bedrooms) – Conditional Consent 26/10/95

**V/1995/0310** – Extensions to nursing home – Conditional Consent 17/08/95

**Assessment:**

The current application seeks consent for the creation of a two storey extension to the rear of the existing care home, which comprises of an additional 20 en-suite bedrooms, 4 lounge areas, a plant room and external balcony space to the first floor eastern elevation. The change of use of the land adjacent to the north west of the care home from residential curtilage and equestrian, to create 13 additional car parking spaces in association with the care home is also proposed, as is the construction of a set of pedestrian steps from the care home to the car park area.

The premises, Wren Hall Care Home, is located on Nottingham Road within the named settlement of Selston. However due to the location of the Green Belt boundary, the proposed two storey extension and car park area are proposed to be constructed within the Nottinghamshire Green Belt, and as such, policies ST4 and EV1 of the ALPR 2002 apply to this application.

The main issues to consider in this application are the impacts on the Green Belt, ecology, visual amenity, residential amenity, economic development and highways.

**Green Belt:**

The area of land upon which the extension to the care home is proposed, is located within the Nottinghamshire Green Belt, and as such policy EV1 of the ALPR 2002 and Part 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land of the NPPF 2018 apply in this respect.

One of the main concern arising as part of this application is the impact that the proposal would have on the openness of the Green Belt and its purposes. Paragraph 145 (c) of the NPPF 2018 identifies that the extension of a building is classed as appropriate development in the Green Belt, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

The original building for the purpose of this application is considered to be the house and nursing home which were joined together following the approval of application V/1989/0287. The floorspace of the 'original building' is therefore considered to be 962sqm, all of which is sited within the named settlement of Selston.

There is no clear guidance in the NPPF about what may amount to disproportionate additions. When considering disproportionate additions, regard should be had to the external dimensions, height, volume and floor area in relation to the original building.

The total floorspace created by the proposed extension is 992sqm, of which 759sqm will be sited within the Green Belt. This amounts to a 79% increase in floorspace within the Green Belt.

There is also an additional 443sqm of floorspace in existence within the Green Belt due to the approval of a two-storey extension under application V/2010/0273. This previous application was approved on the basis of special circumstances. If this application were to be approved, it would total a 125% increase in the floorspace from the original building.

The further increase in floorspace by approximately 759sqm in addition to the previous expansion of 443sqm of new floorspace, is considered to result in a disproportionate addition to the original building in the Green Belt, and is therefore considered to conflict with paragraph 145 (c) of the NPPF 2018. Although there is a general lack of guidance in respect of what is considered to amount to a disproportionate addition, guidance contained within the Council's own Residential Extensions SPD determines that any home extension in the Green Belt above a 30% increase in floorspace is considered to be disproportionate. Although it is acknowledged that this is a care home, it is considered reasonable to assume similar proportionality as a guideline.

Mature trees currently bound the area in which the extension is proposed to the north-west, which presently reduce views into the rear of the site. The area surrounding the application site is open in nature and largely comprises of agricultural fields and equestrian uses. Should the application be granted however, a number of trees along the northern boundary of the site are proposed to be removed,

and subsequently the site will become very open in nature. In this respect, the extension will therefore be highly visible within the surrounding area, and as such, due to the overall size and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that the scheme would result in an intrusive extension within the Green Belt, which would result in significant harm on its openness, to the detriment of the appearance and character of the area.

In relation to the proposed car park, paragraph 146 (e) of the NPPF 2018 identifies that material changes in the use of land is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt providing the proposal preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of it.

The parcel of land upon which the construction of the car park is proposed is presently used for equestrian, and is often used for the purpose of parking a handful of vehicles in association with the existing stables and ménage. As noted, the area surrounding the application site is open in nature. Therefore, any increase in the number of vehicles informally parked within this area will again undoubtedly impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

***Ecology:***

The proposed extension is to be sited within an area of garden space located to the rear of the premises. The majority of the garden space comprises of soft surfaces of shrub and tree planted areas, with smaller areas of grassland.

As part of the proposed scheme 16 individual trees and one tree group are proposed to be removed to achieve the extension. Of the trees to be removed, seven have been categorised as being of a high or moderate quality and value. The arborist report submitted states that amendments should be considered to the scheme in preference to the removal of these trees. The remainder of the trees classed as being of low quality and value. The one tree group to be removed was also categorised as being of low quality and value. Only two of the trees proposed to be removed are considered to have no retention value.

The arborist report submitted with the scheme identifies that 40% of the trees to be removed as part of the scheme are classed as 'mature trees'. Whilst these trees have very little future growth potential and will have generally reached their overall expected size, these trees offer the highest contribution to the landscape character of the site.

Despite their variable form, the trees to be removed constitute a highly visible feature in the landscape and can clearly be seen from public view points, given the elevation of the site. Their removal would as such result in the increase in the prominence of the extension within the surrounding area and further impact on the openness of the Green Belt.



A landscaping plan has also been submitted, which demonstrates that new planting will occur as part of the wider scheme. The proposed planting includes new shrubbery along the western side elevation of the proposed extension. To the north-west of the proposed car park, new planting is proposed, which includes native hedge and woodland species. The use of native species is considered acceptable.

Concerns were originally raised by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust in respect of the implications resulting from the removal of trees on roosting bats and nesting birds. Following the submission of a Preliminary Roosting Survey however, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust are satisfied with the methodology and conclusions drawn in the Preliminary Roost Assessment. No bat roosts were recorded in the trees proposed to be removed, and the trees were assessed as having a negligible or low potential for roosting. Conditions are however recommended should the application be approved.

***Visual Amenity:***

The extension is proposed to project from the rear elevation of the existing care home by approximately 33m, and will have a maximum width of approximately 20m. The extension will have a height of 5m to the eaves and 8m to the ridge, these heights are considered to be in keeping with the scale of the existing premises.

The proposed extension will be set back approximately 70m from the highway edge to the rear of the existing care home. Views of the extension will however be visible from surrounding residential properties.

Whilst the scheme proposes a considerably sized addition to the existing premises, the design of the scheme is contemporary in nature, and draws upon the use of natural materials, such as timber cladding, where possible, and is similar in style to the large two storey extension approved in 2010, under application V/2010/0273.

As such, it is therefore considered that the proposal would be in keeping with the character of the existing premises, as a result of its design.

The area surrounding the application site is open in character. Whilst new shrubbery is proposed along the western elevation of the development, the proposed landscaping scheme lacks the planting of new trees along this boundary. As such, it is considered that the overall size and scale of the scheme would result in a visual intrusion on the wider area, to the detriment of the appearance and visual amenity offered by the wider locality.

***Residential Amenity:***

Concerns have been raised by local residents in respect of associated noise and loss of privacy arising from the proposed scheme.

The existing hard standing, located to the north west of the care home is proposed to be used as a car park to serve the care home, and will be the largest on the site.

This parcel of land is sited directly to the rear of properties 220, 224, 226 and 230 Nottingham Road, and is proposed to be accessed via a private driveway located between 220 and 224 Nottingham Road.

The proposed access driveway will run within 1m of habitable windows sited along the front, rear and side elevations at 220 Nottingham Road. The proposed car parking area is to be open to visitors, staff and commercial vehicles. The Council's Environmental Protection team have raised concerns in respect of the car park being used by commercial vehicles outside of normal working hours, and have suggested that a condition could be included as part of any approved scheme, to restrict the use of the car parking area for commercial vehicles during certain hours.

Due to the nature of the business, many employees will work shift patterns which do not correspond with normal working hours, which is likely to result in the proposed car park being used by employees at unsociable hours of the day. Although the applicant could cordon off the site at certain times of the day, this would be difficult to monitor, manage and enforce.

Given the proximity of the access to 220 Nottingham Road, the use of the parking area at unsociable hours would undoubtedly have a significant detrimental impact upon the living conditions and residential amenity of the occupiers at 220 Nottingham Road, through noise disturbance associated with the comings and goings. It is further considered that the proposed 1.6m high acoustic fence, proposed to be sited less than 1m from habitable room windows, is unlikely to give the desired effect, due to the overall proximity of the property to the access driveway, and will not reduce any noise experienced by the neighbouring residents at first floor level.

Furthermore, the proposed car park area is on higher ground than the properties sited along Nottingham Road. This existing difference in ground level gives rise to direct overlooking and further concerns in relation to loss of privacy at neighbouring properties. Fundamental concerns are raised in respect of this impact on neighbouring property 220 Nottingham Road, as the proposed car park will be sited less than 7m from the rear of the property. This is a significant material consideration.

As no parking spaces have been delineated on the submitted plans, it can be assumed that parking within the proposed car park is likely to be informal in nature, giving rise to significant adhoc movements within the proposed car park. This could therefore result in users of the care home parking within close proximity to the rear of 220 Nottingham Road, resulting in an unacceptable level of overlooking of their private amenity space and habitable rooms, as a result of the existing ground level changes. This once again would result in a serious detrimental impact upon their residential amenity.

There are no overlooking concerns arising directly from the proposed extension, due to compliance with minimum separation distances.

### ***Economic Development:***

The NPPF 2018 identifies that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Paragraph 83 also stresses that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas through well designed new buildings.

The JUS-t Neighbourhood Plan 2017 identifies that Wren Hall Care Home is one of the largest local employers in the Neighbourhood Area. At present, Wren Hall employ 142 staff, and provide many with the opportunity to receive further training and education to progress in their careers. It is undisputed that Wren Hall provides exceptional care for individuals who reside at the care home, and the demand for places is ever present.

The submitted planning statement identifies that the care home is presently having problems filling its 7 shared bedrooms for the first time in 29 years, and the inability to occupy the shared bedrooms will impact upon the annual income of the business and will result in the loss of 8 jobs, should these rooms not be filled. However internal reconfigurations may be possible to overcome this issue to provide more single room bedspaces.

Furthermore, an application was recently received and approved to convert part of the premises into a day nursery. If it is an essential requirement for the additional bedspaces, then it is considered that this could take precedence over the day nursery.

It is suggested that the proposed extension will generate a further 9 jobs, whilst retaining a further 8 in employment.

Both Part 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy of the NPPF 2018 and policy NP9 – Supporting Local Businesses of the JUS-t Neighbourhood Plan 2017, seeks to support an increase in employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

Having said this, policy NP9 (part 2) of the JUS-t Neighbourhood Plan 2017 stipulates that *'development for business purposes will need to demonstrate that .... the nature of the operation does not affect the amenity of the surrounding area.'* As already raised, it is considered that the proposed scheme would result in an unacceptable harm on the Green Belt and on the amenity of neighbouring residents, to the detriment of the existing visual and residential amenity experienced by local residents.

### ***Highways:***

The scheme proposes that the creation of the car parking area to the north west of the site will generate an additional 13 off-street car parking spaces for users of the care home, such as visitors and employees. The Highways Authority have confirmed that they are satisfied that the proposed car park will provide appropriate levels of off-street parking in line with the proposed expansion of the premises.

The proposed car park area will be accessed via an existing vehicular access, and appropriate visibility splays have been provided in the submitted plans.

Concerns have however been raised by the Highways Authority and local residents, that as the access is served from a busy classified road, carrying a daily average of 8,650 vehicles per day, there is a risk of vehicular conflict and an impediment of the adjacent highway, to the detriment of the safety of highway users. This conflict is likely to arise due to the informal access arrangement. This concern could however be overcome through the submission of a formalised access arrangement at the entrance to the car park.

***Other Matters:***

Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a demand for places specifically at Wren Hall Nursing Home. The need for new bedspaces in residential care homes across the District therefore needs to be assessed.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that there is a need for 650 bedspaces in residential care homes (C2 use) across Ashfield District for the period 2013 to 2033.

Between 2013-2017, 124 new bedspaces were delivered across the District, and a further 163 bedspaces on C2 schemes have outstanding planning approval.

This gives a final requirement for 363 bedspaces to be provided for the period 2018 to 2033.

Evidence held by Nottinghamshire County Council and information supplied by the Clinical Commissioning Groups indicate a current over-provision of C2 development within the Ashfield District at the present time, and concerns are raised that this over capacity of residential places is causing a challenge to the provider market as some homes are struggling to maintain viable occupancy rates. Furthermore, it also needs to be noted that the strategic direction of both the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the County Council is to support people in their own homes for as long as is possible and feasible rather than placement in a care home. This delay in admissions into care homes is supported by assistive technology. These schemes are able to provide an element of care in an individual's own home, which would otherwise be provided by specialist housing schemes and care homes. As such, it is considered that the demand for bedspaces is likely to decrease in the future.

## **Conclusion:**

The scheme comprises of a large-scale expansion at an existing, well established residential care home within the rural settlement of Selston. An economic argument for the development exists, as the scheme will facilitate in supporting the growth of a local business and will contribute to the creation of a further 9 jobs within the community.

Having said this, the majority of the expansion is located within the Nottinghamshire Green Belt, resulting in a 125% increase in floorspace, which is considered to be a significant disproportionate addition to the original floorspace of the dwelling and care home. Furthermore, the removal of the mature trees along the northwestern boundary of the site will result in the extension appearing as a prominent addition within the surrounding landscape, consequently having a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the wider area and impacting on the openness of the Green Belt.

The access driveway to the proposed car parking area is to be sited within 1m of habitable room windows at 220 Nottingham Road, resulting in an unacceptable level of disturbance through increased comings and goings, and associated noise. The existing ground level changes are also considered to result in an unacceptable loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers arising from the car park area.

On balance therefore, it is considered that no very special circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the impact that the development would have on the visual amenity of the area, the amenity of neighbouring residents, and the openness of the Green Belt. It is therefore considered that the harm created by the development significantly outweighs the economic contribution that the development would have on the local area.

It is therefore recommended that this application is refused on the following grounds:

## **Recommendation: Refuse**

### **REASONS**

- 1. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt, as the proposed extension represents a disproportionate addition to the size of the original building, resulting in a 125% increase in external floor space and additional volume created within the Green Belt. The proposal would result in harm to the openness and permanence of the Green Belt through the creation of additional built form and volume in this location. The substantial weight given to the Green Belt harm is not outweighed by any other matters, and consequently the very special circumstances required to allow the development do not exist. The proposal therefore conflicts with policy**

**ST1 and EV1 of the Ashfield Local Plan Review 2002, and Part 13 –  
Protecting Green Belt Land of the National Planning Policy Framework  
2018.**

- 2. The location of the proposed car park and access driveway would have an adverse impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers by virtue of additional comings and goings over and above what can reasonably be expected. Furthermore, the noise associated with the increased comings and goings would also give rise to an unacceptable level of disturbance on neighbouring residents. The proposal is therefore contrary to saved policies ST1 and HG8 of the Ashfield Local Plan Review 2002.**