

4 St George's Crescent
Gravesend, DA12 4AR
Design & Access Statement

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

This Design & Access Statement details the proposal of a Change of Use from a Class C3 dwellinghouse to a Class C2 Residential Institution at 4 St George's Crescent, Gravesend. This document accompanies supporting illustrative materials including an architectural drawing pack by Chandran|Hughes Architects, Statement of Purpose, Location Risk Assessment and Children's Guide by PCS Services Ltd.

This is a proposal undertaken by Chandran|Hughes Architects Ltd on behalf of PCS Services Ltd.

Key



The Site



Location of site

2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 SITE LOCATION

The proposal seeks to provide a high quality residential institution (Class C2). PCS Services Ltd aims to accommodate placements for young people aged 11-17 years.

The Site:

4 St George's Crescent, Gravesend, DA12 4AR

Site Area: 331.8m² / 0.033 Ha
Ward: Riverview Park
Local Authority District: Gravesham
Local Authority: Kent
Constituency: Gravesham
County: Kent



Existing Location Plan



Aerial map showing boundary line

2.2 EXISTING SITE

The Existing Property

The existing property is a 1.5 storey 3 bedroom semi-detached house with a front garden and spacious rear garden.

Planning History

There is no relevant planning history associated with the property.

Nearby Applications of a Similar Nature

Reference 20230591 - 79 Dickens Road, DA12 2JX - Approved - Change of use from class C3(a) dwellinghouse to a class C2 residential institution.

Reference 20220437 - 2 Old Road East, DA12 1NG - Approved - Change of Use from dwellinghouse (C3) to children's care home (C2)

Reference 20210697 - 20 Peacock Street, DA12 1EF - Application for change of use from residential dwelling (C3) to residential institution (C2), internal and external restoration plus improvement work including bathroom renovation, toilet alteration plus demolition of outbuildings.

Reference 20210651 - 30 Russell Road, DA12 2RT - Application for change of use from the existing C3 - Dwelling house to C2 - Residential Supported Living

Site Location

4 St George's Crescent is a, 8-minute drive from Gravesend Rail Station (2.1 miles). It is in close proximity to the following bus stops Mike Spring Court (N), St David's Crescent (W), Livingstone Road (SE), St David's Crescent (E), St Hilda's Way (N), Chichester Rise (SW).

The property is in close proximity to a number of primary and secondary schools, including Riverview Infant School, King's Farm Primary School, Whitehill Primary School, Tymberwood Academy, Singlewell Primary School, Riverview Junior School, Thamesview School, Ifield School; indicating the location is an area that supports young people's safety.

The property is a 3-minute drive (0.7 miles) from a GP surgery on Whinfell Way, and a 3-minute drive (0.8 miles) from Lamorna Surgery. Darent Valley Hospital is a 14-minute drive (7.6 miles) away and a 21-minute drive to Medway Maritime Hospital.

The location of the property and proximity to local amenities including schools, shops, GPs, hospitals etc. make it suitable for a care home for young people.

The property lies in Flood Zone 1, with a low risk of surface water flooding and a very low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.

Approach

The site can be approached via Valley Drive Road, St David's Crescent or St Hilda's Way for both vehicles and pedestrians.

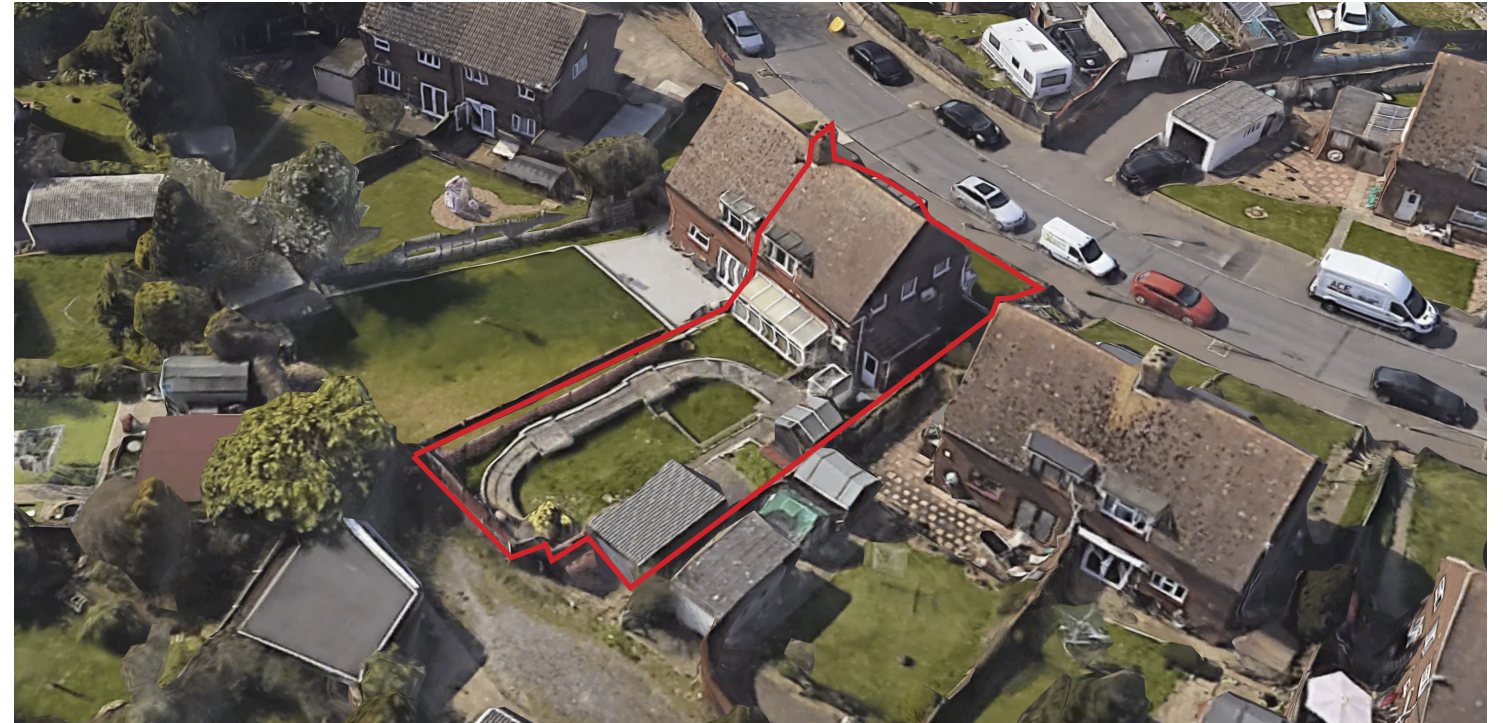


View of property from St George's Crescent



View of property from garden

2.3 SITE AERIAL VIEWS



Aerial views of the site

2.4 SITE PHOTOS



View of front of property from St George's Crescent



View of front



View of rear showing space for bins and shed for bikes



View of front entrance



View of rear of the property



View of rear elevation



View of rear garden



View of conservatory



View of side access

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

3.1 PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

PCS Services Ltd

PCS Services Ltd is the company who will own and manage this children's care home. PCS Services Ltd caters for children who have learning difficulties and disabilities. This is inclusive of children who have ADHD, Autism and children who have significant gaps in their learning. They welcome children who may have Education, Health, and Care plans (Statement of special education plans) that specify their needs, specialist support that is required and strategies that should be employed for their needs to be met.

Their ethos is based on the belief that children should be the best they can be by giving them the same opportunities in life regardless of their experience, disability or age. They aim to offer a home where children can grow, develop and mature into respectable, responsible and caring individuals. A home where children are supported to achieve their full potential. They take a holistic approach to the care of young people, their individual needs are identified and tangible SMART goals are set to address issues, teach new skills and address behavioural problems.

The company's purpose is to provide high quality care in a warm and loving environment, where children feel safe, secure and most importantly they feel valued and wanted. They seek to promote the well-being of the children, educational advancement and increased self-confidence.

The company's goal is to provide exceptional quality of care for children. This includes empowering, supporting, and striving for inclusion. They aim to establish a safe and secure environment where a child can develop their identity and understanding whilst having their needs met in an honest, positive and above all consistent and professional manner.

The Mission

PCS believe in the benefits of the Person Centred Approach:

- We treat any children under our care with dignity, compassion, and respect.
- We provide coordinated care and support
- We offer personalised engagement, support and care that are tailored to each young person.
- We enable young people to recognise their abilities and enhance their skills for independent living
- We focus on the young person's personal needs, wants, desires and goals so they are central to the care provided.

"Our holistic approach facilitates our young people having a sense of being comfortable and confident in our services, encompassing their social, emotional, and practical needs to improve and maintain a good standard of life. We aim to provide support to improve young people's independence and embody their support plan in their daily activities. We feel it is important for all young people to feel respected, involved and in control of their own lives, with the capacity to make wise choices that will enhance their future prospects."



PCS SERVICES
— LIMITED —
IT'S ABOUT MAKING THEM CENTRE OF CARE

3.2 PROPOSED USE

Use

The proposal is to convert the existing 3-bedroom dwelling (class C3) into a high quality care home (class C2) for children/young people aged 11-17.

The care home will cater for up to 3 children. It will provide ample communal space within the home and outdoor open amenity space, along with individual personalised bedrooms for privacy, creating a sense of home and encouraging play and well-being.

The quality of care and accommodation that will be provided in this property is ultimately providing children/young people with a safe and secure environment, where they will have the opportunity to plan for their future through training and support.

The number of children currently in unregulated settings has increased from 2,900 in 2009 to 6,050 in 2021. Due to the high levels of unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers, there will be introduction of mandatory national standards which will be overseen by an Ofsted-led registration and inspection regime.

Staffing & General Management

Mandatory national standards and Ofsted-led registration and inspection for providers of supported accommodation for young people will ensure providers have statements of purpose and intent setting out their service offer and the role of the staff in delivering this. Please refer to 'Statement of Purpose', attached as part of this planning application for further detail.

4 St George's Crescent provides a team of 24hr support staff who are fully trained to work with Children and Young People (CYP) with additional needs.

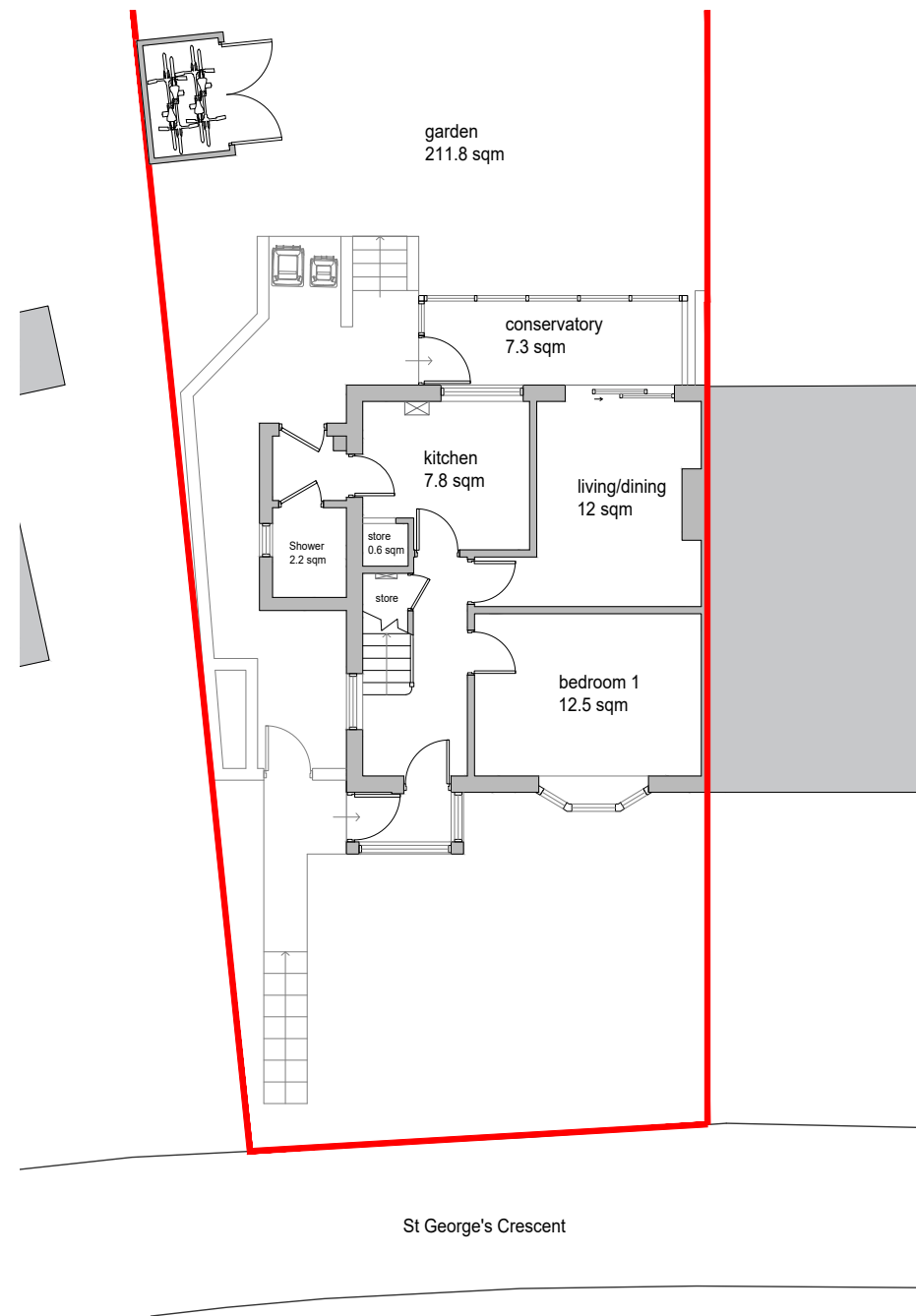
The proposal will provide residential space for up to 3 no. children/young people. There is also an office for staff located on the first floor. As the property is staffed 24/7, the children/young adults will always be supervised and feel secure and cared for.

There will be a maximum of 2 members of staff on duty at one time working the following shifts: AM 08:00-20:00 & a maximum of 2 staff members working waking nights 20:00-08:00.

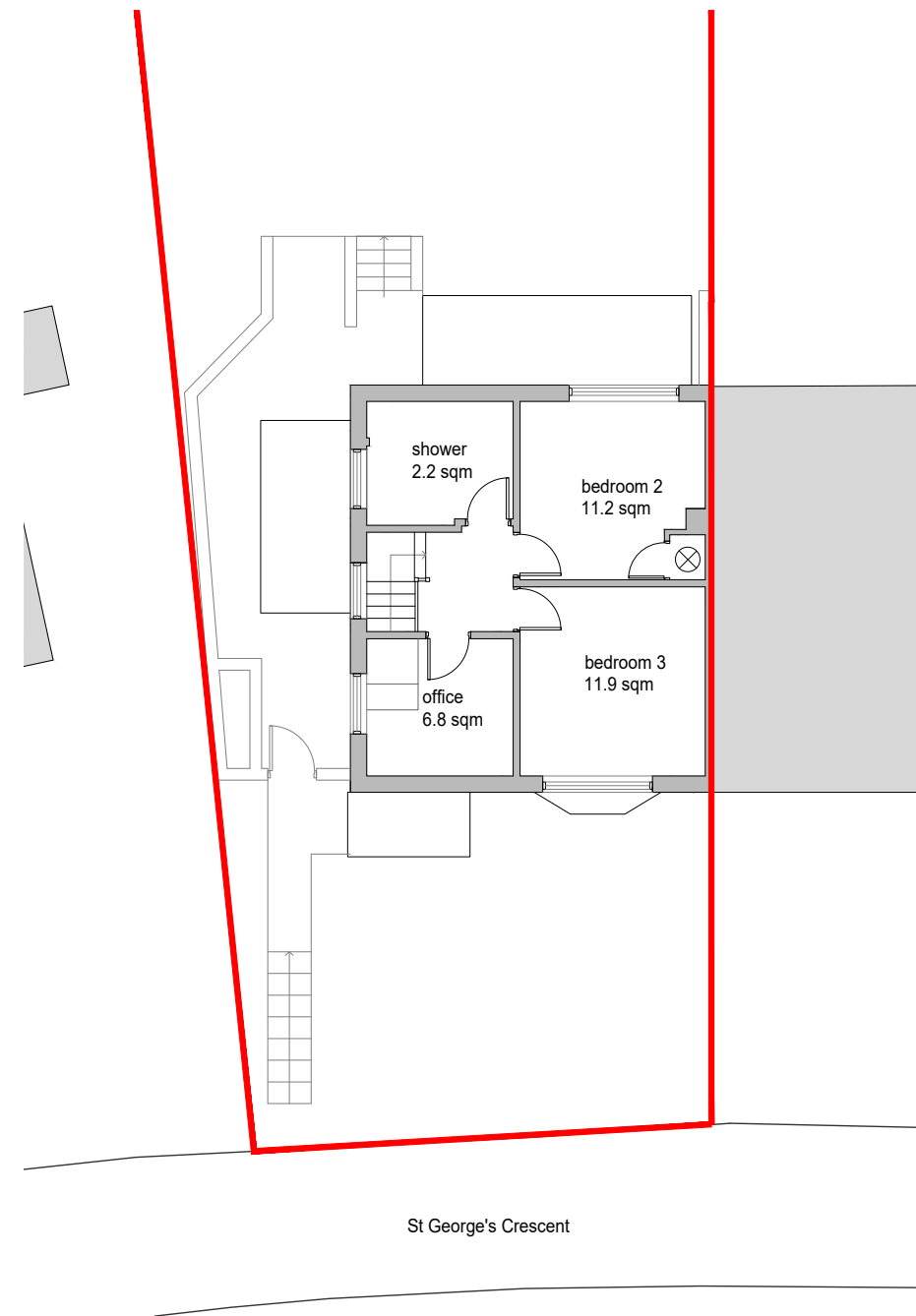
Though the maximum number of staff on duty at one time is 2, this will in practice range between 1 and 2 members depending on the needs of the children/young people. There will always be a senior member of staff on shift, as well as 24/7 support to assist and oversee the running of the home out of hours, weekends and holidays. The managers and Responsible Individual are always on call regularly.

3.3 PROPOSED DESIGN

There will not be any structural changes made to the existing design and layout.

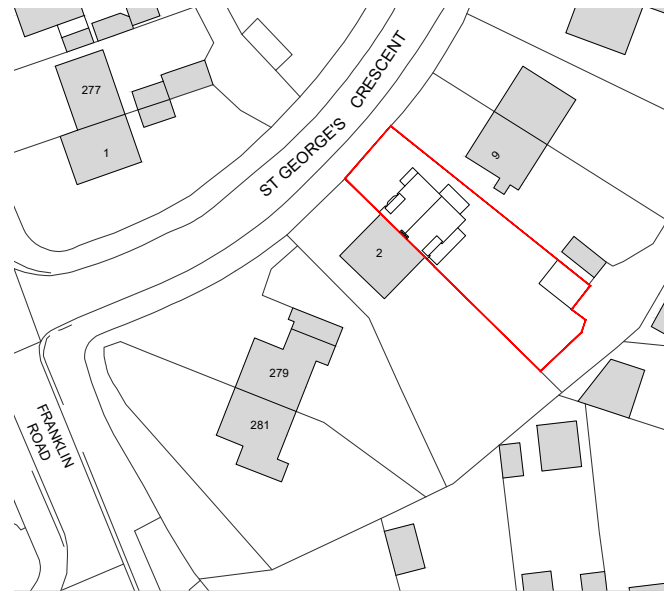


Proposed Ground Floor

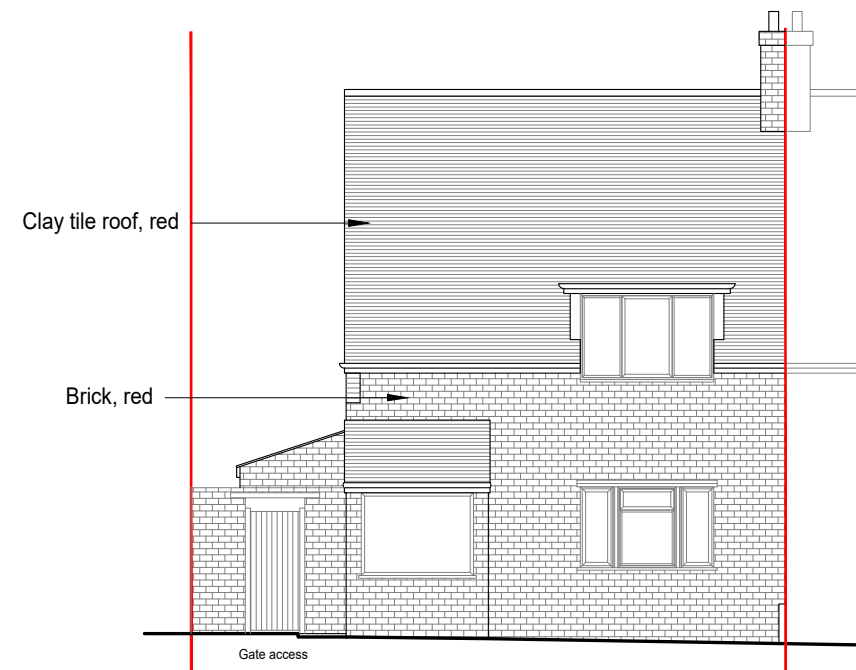


Proposed First Floor

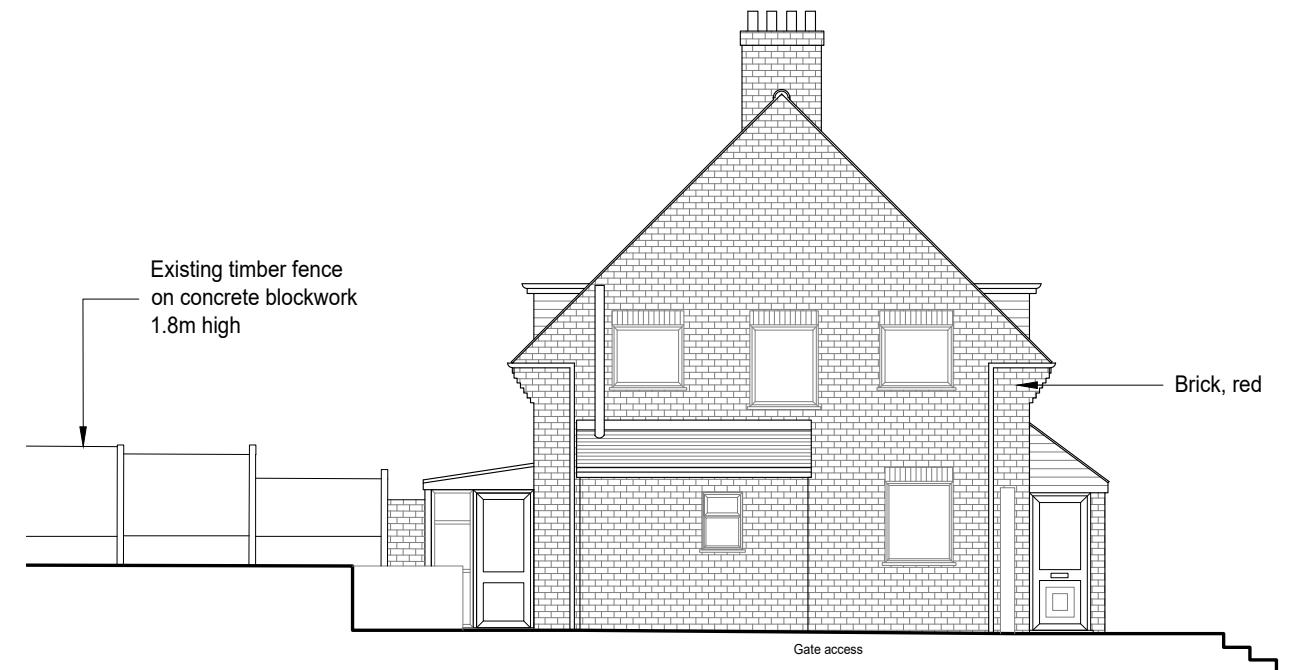
3.3 PROPOSED DESIGN



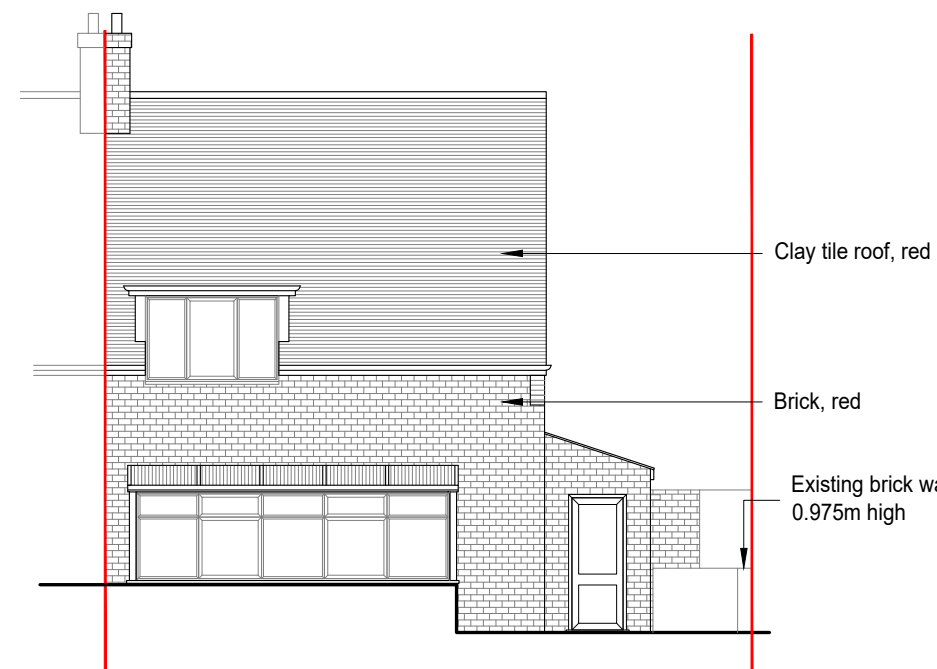
Proposed Block Plan



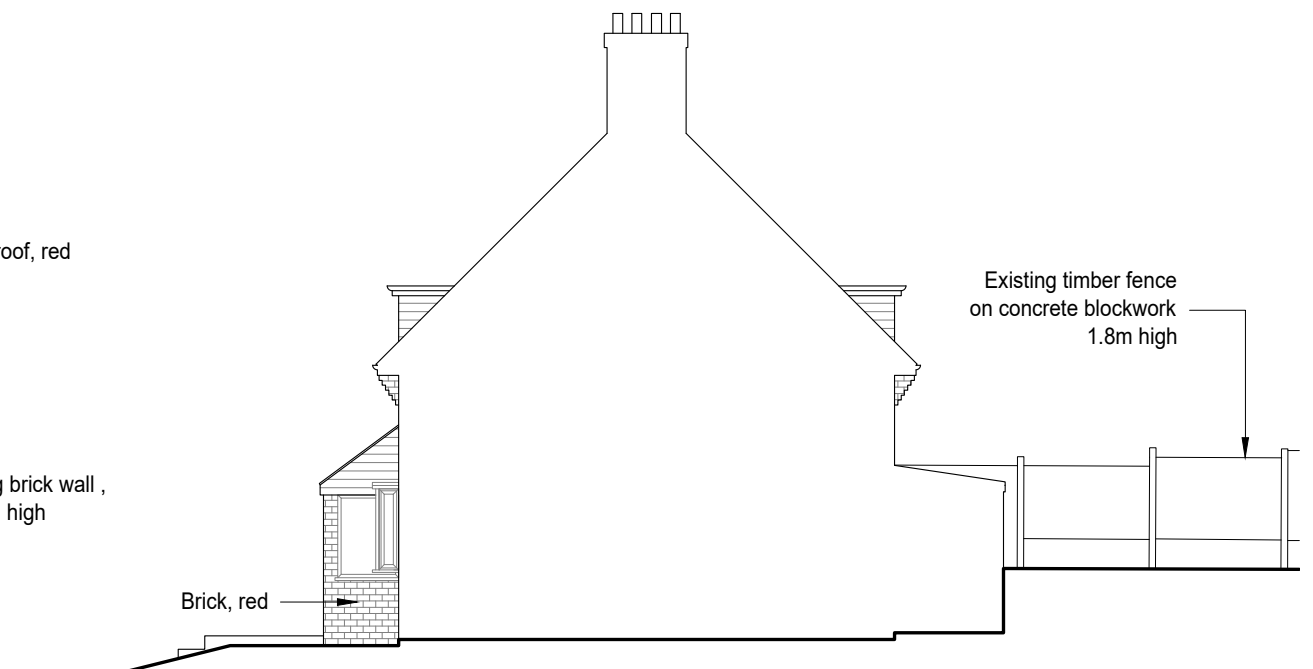
North West Elevation



North East Elevation



South East Elevation



South West Elevation



3.3 PROPOSED DESIGN

Use

The proposal is to convert the existing 3-bedroom dwelling (class C3) into a high quality care home (class C2) for children/young people aged 11-17 with learning difficulties and disabilities. This is inclusive of children who have ADHD, Autism and children who have significant gaps in their learning.

The care home will cater for up to 3 children. It provides sufficient communal space within the home and ample outdoor open amenity space, along with individual personalised bedrooms for privacy. This creates a sense of feeling at home and belonging.

Layout & Space Standards

The number of residents will not exceed the existing, therefore no additional amenity impact and noise disturbance would be generated.

Architecturally, the plans and elevations will remain the same. There is a separate kitchen, open dining and living room and an additional conservatory, in total adding up to approx. 27.1sqm, offering ample communal space for the staff and children/young people to gather. All habitable rooms and bedrooms have sufficient ventilation and natural daylight, compliant with current UK Building Regulations.

Though the size of the existing small bedroom on the first floor complies with Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance, these bedroom floorspaces no longer apply and are superseded by the nationally described standards. As a result, the third bedroom has been moved to the ground floor to ensure sufficient quality of bedroom space. The small bedroom will now be used as an office. The proposal meets the requirements specified in the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard.

Amount and Scale

No increase in floor area or internal rearrangements are required. The scale of the building will remain the same.

Amenity

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants.

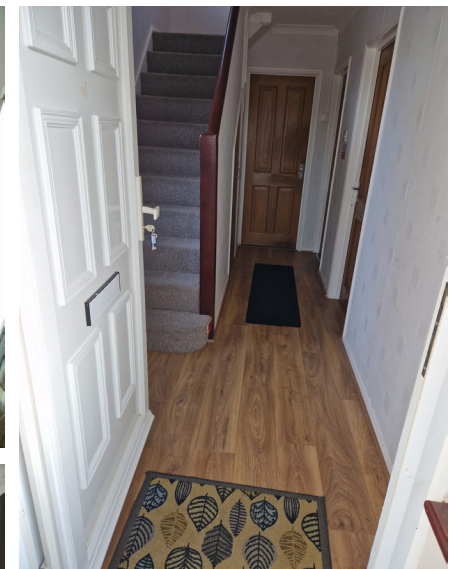
In line with both the Nationally Described Standards (NDSS) and Gravesham Borough Council's SPD2 - Residential Layout Guidelines; a 3-bedroom property should have a minimum garden area of 60sqm and a minimum depth of 10m from the rear wall of the house. For communal dwellings, a minimum of 25 sq metres per dwelling for private amenity space may be considered appropriate. The proposal has 211 sqm of landscaped garden with approx. 17m depth, exceeding these standards and providing substantial high quality green space with trees for recreation and play. External access is provided to the rear garden of the house through the side.

Appearance & Materials

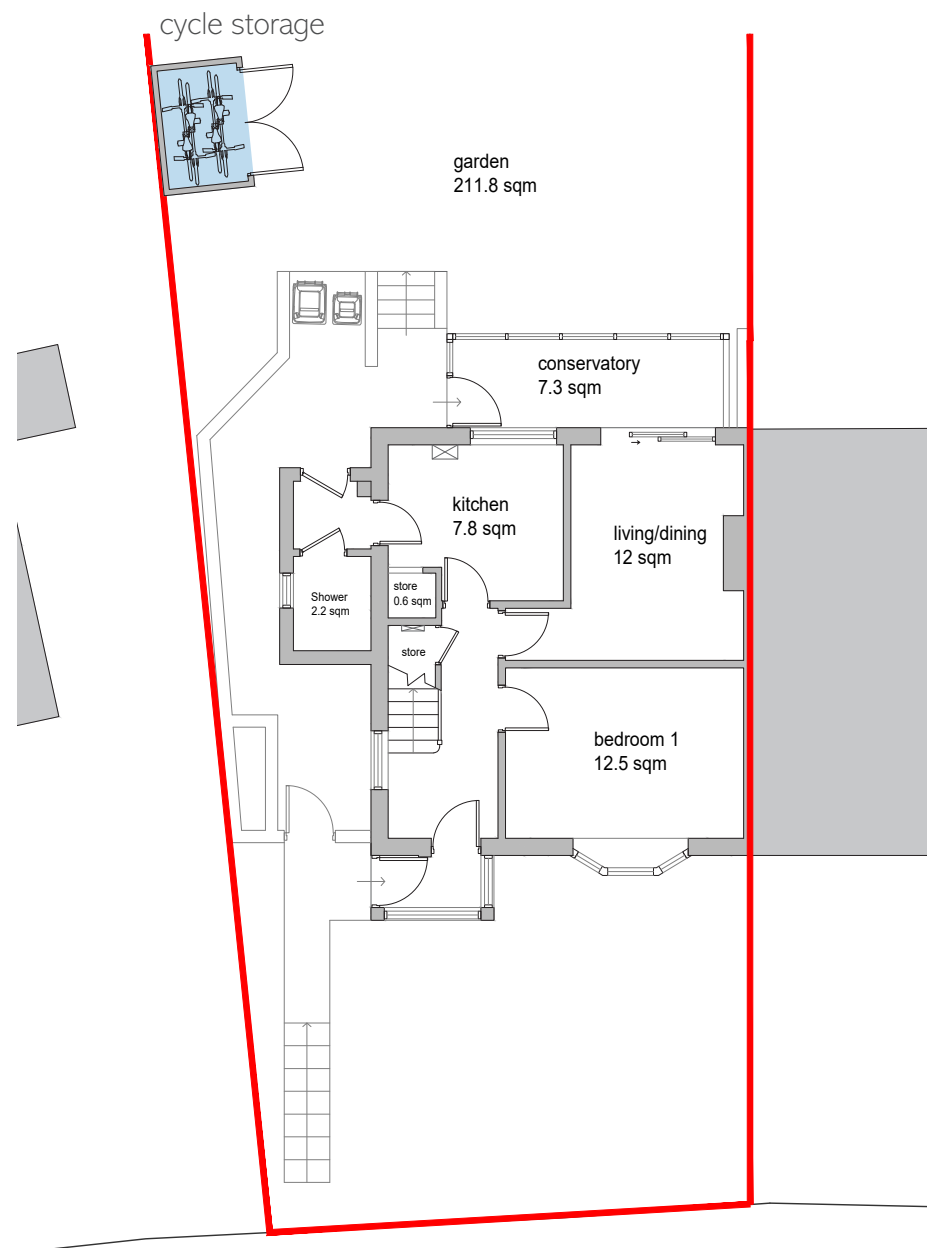
The external materials will remain the same. The property provides a homely yet high quality finish with a modern kitchen, creating a pleasant environment for the children and staff members.

Lighting is consistent throughout, and signage throughout the homes especially relating to fire will be contrasted and accessible. A well-lit and connected layout creates an environment which encourages well-being, social cohesion and development of the young people.

In line with Kent Design Guide, which Gravesham Council has adopted as supplementary guidance; the proposal provides an opportunity for diversity (1.1 Good Design and Policy Framework) - making places with variety[...]in the mixture of uses. Good design can also enrich the existing environment. In line with 1.4 Sustainability - one of the five principles of sustainability is Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society. By providing vulnerable children and young people accommodation and tailored support for them to re-integrate back into society, this is pivotal to ensuring they have a good quality of life, now and for generations to come.



3.3 PROPOSED DESIGN



Plan showing location of proposed bicycle store

Bicycle Parking

The proposal exceeds the Minimum Cycle Parking Standards in SPG 4 - KCC Vehicle Parking Standards 2006, which states that for a Class C2 Residential Institution, there should be a minimum of 1 space provided per 10 beds.

The existing shed is secure and will therefore be utilised for storing 4 no. bicycles for both children and staff. This will also encourage sustainable travel amongst the staff.

Car Parking

For a residential institution, the Kent Vehicle Parking Standards require a maximum of one space per resident staff plus one space per two additional staff. The proposal has 2 members of staff on site at one time, therefore only 2 parking spaces are required. Staff members are also encouraged to travel in using public transport.

The property has 3 no. bedrooms and kerb-side parking available on most of St George's Crescent. The nearest car park is Echo Square Car Park (1.0 mile away), a 23 minute walk from the property.

The property will only have approx. 1 visitor a week. Along with the fact that the property being close to public transport and local amenities, and that there are no parking restrictions on St George's Crescent - this will not create a large amount of traffic and therefore have minimal impact on the highway network. Taking all of the above into consideration, the proposal would not have an adverse impact to highway safety, therefore would be in line with Policy CS11 'Transport' of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and Policies T1 'Impact of Development on Highway Network' and P5 'Exceptions to the Vehicle Parking Standards - Change of Use of Buildings' of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994.

Fire Safety

To achieve the highest standard of fire safety, the proposal will be in line with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document Part B Fire Safety.

It is PCS Services' policy to ensure as far as reasonably practical that all children and young people in their care, staff and visitors are protected from the outbreak of fire. In the event of a fire, all staff are fully conversant with our fire evacuation procedures. Fire drills will be held monthly during the day and evening/night and recorded in the fire log. The manager and the shift leader will have prior knowledge of a fire drill.

All staff will receive training in relation to each child's Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan. All PCS Service's equipment is regularly serviced under contract i.e., alarms, extinguishers, and their own Health and Safety Officer monitors them on a weekly basis and record and report any defects.

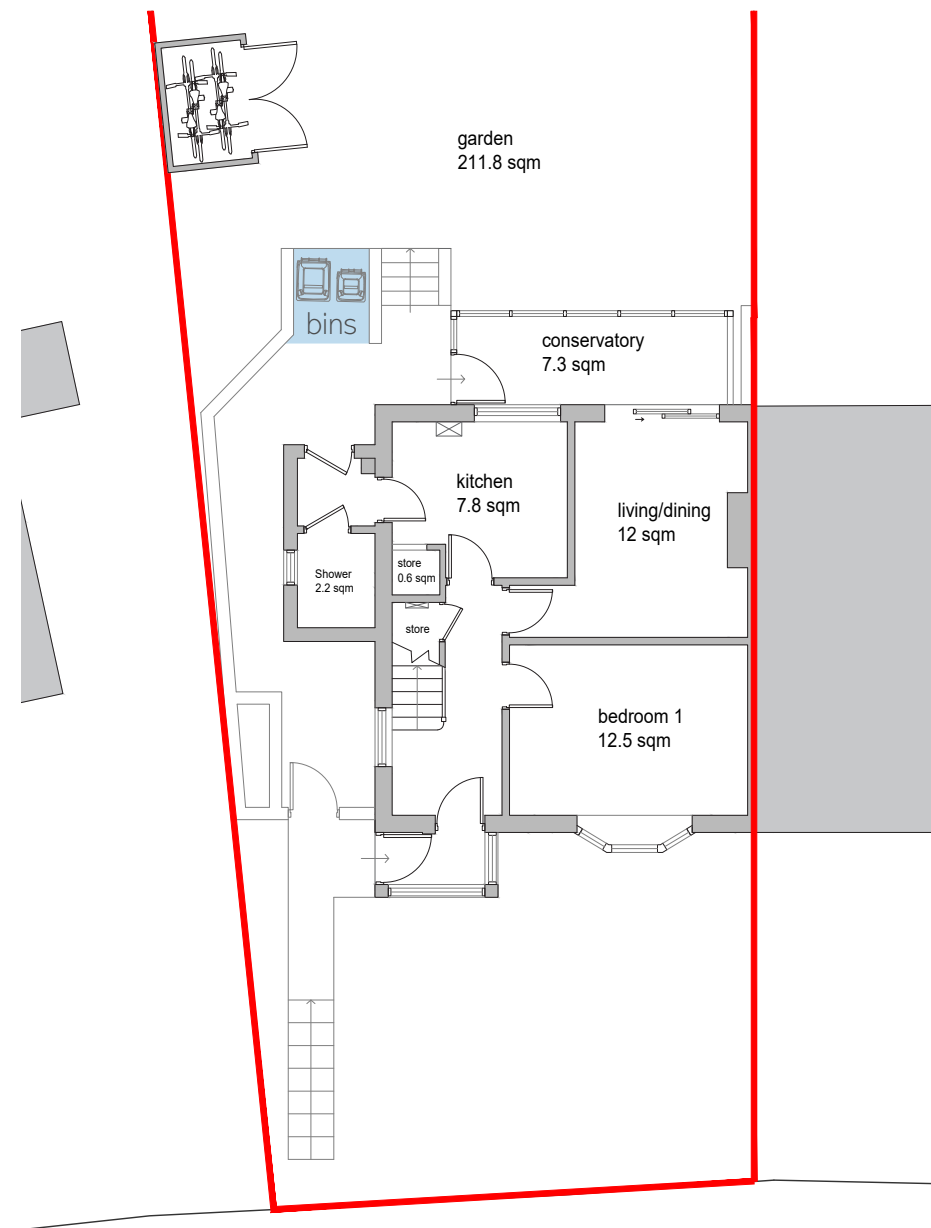
Security

All boundaries are 1.8 metres in height with supporting beams facing inwards. The side access gate can be securely lockable from both sides to prevent unauthorised access to the rear of the site.

CCTV will be installed at the main entrance doors to monitor the movements of the occupants.

External lighting will be installed to encourage natural surveillance in areas such as entrances. Existing rear doors and windows that are not being replaced may require limiters/restrictors to help maintain security.

3.4 WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN



Plan showing location of bins

Refuse and Re-cycling Management Strategy

The proposal includes appropriate space and provision for the storage and collection of waste and recyclable material, in line with Policy DM10 Waste Management. Waste and recycling would be collected as any other household at their kerb site.

As per the drawings, the property has 1 no. 180ltr black bin for waste, 1 no. 240ltr black bin with green lid for recycling, and 1 no. 23ltr black bin with orange lid for food waste, which are kept at the rear of the property, on a hardstanding and transported to the collection point at the front of the property on collection days.

Garden waste is collected on a fortnightly basis. Garden waste will either be stored in a 240 litre garden bin, 140 litre garden bin or garden sacks.

Clinical Waste

Gravesham Council provides a free collection service for used needles and medical bags if required. Sharps boxes are available in the following sizes:

- Travel size 500ml
- Small 1 litre
- Medium 5 litres
- Large 11.5 litres

Any clinical waste will be temporarily stored in sharps bins which will be kept in a secure dry place away from children, until collection day.

3.5 PLANNING POLICY

With regard to planning policy, the following will need to be considered: National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, Gravesham Local Plan: First Review 1994, Gravesham SPD2 Residential Layout Guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement 2015 (amended 2020), Technical Housing Standards - nationally described space standards 2015, and SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards 2006.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations. The proposal will encourage a healthy and inclusive environment, promoting social interaction for the young people and surrounding residents.

In line with Paragraph 130 of the NPPF, the proposal will have a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. In line with Section 12 of the NPPF (Achieving Sustainable Development and Well-designed Places), the proposal will add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of its use, with the aim to provide a stepping stone for young people to access an equal footing in society.

Other relevant policies include:

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014)

Policy CS10 - 'Physical and Social Infrastructure' supports proposals that lead to the provision of additional infrastructure that improves community well-being.

Policy CS14 - 'Housing Type and Size' seeks to protect the mix of housing in existing housing stock and requires new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes taking into account existing character and evidence of local need.

Policy CS19 - 'Development & Design Principles' - As the proposal does not involve any alterations to the exterior of the property, this will not result in any adverse impacts on the character or appearance of the building or surrounding area.

Other relevant planning policies include:

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

The proposal is in line with Policy H5 - 'Increasing Housing Stock by Conversion of Existing Buildings' which provides the following criteria for the consideration of proposals for the conversion of existing properties to provide multiple occupancy accommodation including care homes:

- 1) The building shall be in an appropriate area for conversion to flats maisonettes, bedsitters and multiple occupancy. Unless there are special or overriding circumstances, conversions will not normally be permitted in an area comprised for the most part of single family dwellings. Conversely conversions will not normally be permitted in areas which are environmentally unsuitable for young families and which already demonstrate a predominance of multiple occupation.
- 2) The building shall be of such a size and arrangement as to be generally unsuitable for single family occupation.
- 3) The proposal shall have regard to the Borough Council's Residential Layout Guidelines, as set out in supplementary planning guidance.
- 4) The adopted Vehicle Parking Standards must be achieved wherever feasible.

Policy H6 - 'Provision to Meet Special Housing Needs' supports proposals in appropriate locations for residential hostels and homes whilst ensuring that they do not cluster together and harm the character of the area. There are other dwellings in the area that have been converted into care homes, however are not located right next to no. 4 George's Crescent.

Other relevant planning policies include:

- P5 – Exceptions to the Vehicle Parking Standards – Change of Use of Buildings
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

3.6 REGULATIONS & GUIDELINES

Other relevant regulations and guidelines include the DfE Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards April 2015, and The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

Department for Education 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards April 2015'

In line with the key principles outlined in this Guide, (which accompanies the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015), the young person will have an environment where they will be loved, happy, healthy, safe from harm and able to develop, thrive and fulfil their potential. It will value and nurture every child as an individual with talents, strengths and capabilities that can develop over time.

Residential care will foster positive relationships, encouraging strong bonds between young and staff in the home on the basis of jointly undertaken activities, shared daily life, domestic and non-domestic routines and established boundaries of acceptable behaviour. As an example young people are invited to participate in selection and preparation of food, educating them on nutrition and setting them up for independence.

Care will be ambitious, nurturing children's school learning and out-of-school learning and their ambitions for their future. Residential child care should be attentive to the child/young adult's need, supporting emotional, mental and physical health needs, including repairing earlier damage to self-esteem and encouraging friendships.

Care will be outward facing, working with the wider system of professionals for each child, and with children's families (where advised) and communities of origin to sustain links and understand past problems. There will be high expectations of staff as committed members of a team, as decision makers and as activity leaders. In support of this, all staff and managers are engaged in on-going learning about their role and the children and families they work with.

The property will provide a safe and stimulating environment in a high-quality building, with spaces that support nurture and allow privacy as well as common spaces and spaces to be active.

DfE DoH - Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children - Statutory guidance for local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and NHS England

"Most children become looked after as a result of abuse and neglect. Although they have many of the same health issues as their peers, the extent of these is often greater because of their past experiences. For example, almost half of children in care have a diagnosable mental health disorder and two-thirds have special educational needs. Delays in identifying and meeting their emotional well-being and mental health needs can have far reaching effects on all aspects of their lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults."

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015

The Regulations set out nine Quality Standards, which the proposal and the management of the care home will meet:

- 1) The quality and purpose of care standard
- 2) The children's views, wishes and feelings standard
- 3) The education standard
- 4) The enjoyment and achievement standard
- 5) The health and well-being standard
- 6) The positive relationships standard
- 7) The protection of children standard
- 8) The leadership and management standard
- 9) The care planning standard

Gravesham Youth and Community Health and Well-being Strategy 2022-2027

Gravesham Borough Council plays a pivotal role in supporting youth ambition and positive navigation of young people's lives.

The Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People's Well-being - Department of Education June 2012. - The Act sets out that it is local authorities' duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, equality of access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their well-being.



Image from Gravesham Youth and Community Health Well-being Strategy 2022-27

3.7 EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING NEED

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people. The following pieces of text are extracts from research and analysis articles published by Ofsted, available on www.gov.uk

According to "[Gov.uk - Why do children go into children's homes](#)" (attached as part of this application), there is clear evidence for the need for children's care homes. "Children's Homes are never far from the forefront of public debate. In 2020 alone, Research in Practice and the Children's Commissioner both published major research on children's homes. Both challenged the status quo on the subject and proposed an overhaul of the care sector. More recently, in 2021, the Local Government Association published research on the topic, and it is an important focus of the Independent Care Review.

According to "[National Statistics – Main Findings: Children's Social Care in England 2021](#)" (30 March 2022), there were 2,706 children's homes of all types as at 31 March 2021, a 10% increase (246 homes) from the previous year (2,460). This year saw a greater increase in children's homes than the previous year, when there was a 7% increase. These homes were registered for 12,732 places, a 5% increase from 12,175 as at 31 March 2020. In the previous year, the number of places had only grown by 1% (12,035 to 12,175 places). "Out of the 12 million children living in England, just under 400,000 (3%) are in the social care system at any one time. More than 80,000 of these children are children in care. As at 31 March 2021, across England, there were 151 LAs responsible for ensuring and overseeing the effective delivery of social care services for children." (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-care-data-in-england-2021/main-findings-childrens-social-care-in-england-2021>)

According to a [Press Release from Ofsted published on 8 July 2022](#), "Children in the care system are often placed in homes far away from their families because of a lack of suitable places near to where they live." (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/many-children-placed-in-homes-far-away-from-their-families-amid-national-sufficiency-challenge>)

According to a [Press Release on Gov.uk](#), Each LA in England has a 'sufficiency duty' to ensure, as far as is 'reasonably practicable', that there is sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of its children in care. The lack of suitable accommodation for children and the uneven distribution of children's homes across the country is well documented. This is alongside an increasing need for homes and carers that can meet the diverse and complex needs of children. Across the country, there are children who are living outside of their LA, particularly in children's homes. (For some children, this may be by choice and be a positive outcome for them.)

According to, "[What types of needs do children's homes often care for?](#)", an [Ofsted article published on 8 July 2022](#) (attached as part of this application), sufficiency of places in children's homes is an ongoing area of concern in children's social care. In large part, this is related to the uneven distribution of homes across the country, which means that a child may be moved a long way from their family and friends when they go to live in a children's home. Alongside this is a concern about the availability of nearby homes that can accommodate children with particular needs. Homes were not evenly distributed across the regions of England, and there were no close relationships between the children's needs, where the homes were situated and what needs those homes met.

According to the [Secretary of State foreword in the Department of Education Government Consultation Response on Introducing national standards for independent and semi-independent provision for looked-after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17, December 2021](#), (attached as part of this application) "every child in this country deserves a stable loving home which keeps them safe, meets their needs and enables them to access a high-quality education, a job or training. All children must be given the opportunity to succeed and achieve their maximum potential in life. This is equally important for those children who are unable to stay with their families."

[Kent County Council: Social Care, Health and Well-being - Community Support Market Position Statement](#)

"We want to stimulate a diverse market for care that offers people choice so that they are supported to remain as independent as possible, for as long as possible and enjoy a good quality of life, within their local communities. We need a wide range of high quality services that maintain the population's well-being and independence and supports those with complex or long term conditions."

A study led by the London School of Economics and Political Science estimates that autism costs the country at least £32 billion per year in treatment, lost earnings, care and support for children and adults with autism. This is far higher compared to some other conditions: £12 billion for cancer, £8billion for heart disease and £5 billion for stroke.

3.7 EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING NEED

The following tables of data have been extracted from the previous Ofsted research articles on pg 19:

Data for Figure 1: Number of children living in children’s homes, as at 31 March 2020

Group	Number
Children living in children’s homes	7,000
Children living in children’s homes inside local authority	2,300
Children living in children’s homes outside local authority	4,700
Children living outside local authority within 20 miles of family homes	1,400
Children living outside local authority more than 20 miles of family homes	3,300

Data for Figure 2: Number of homes stating that they accommodated each area of need, as at March 2020

Area of need	Number of homes	Percentage of homes
Complex needs	1,999	93%
Abuse and neglect	1,197	56%
Learning difficulties	924	43%
Autism spectrum disorder	508	24%
Mental health problems	475	22%
Physical disabilities	219	10%
Complex health needs	111	5%
Sensory impairment	76	4%

Table 1: Percentage of children living in children’s homes by location and placing region, as at 31 March 2020

Region	Children’s homes (by location) %	Children in children’s homes (by placing region) %	Percentage point difference
North West	25	19	+6
West Midlands	19	12	+7
North East, Yorkshire and Humber	15	18	–3
South East	11	14	–3
East Midlands	11	12	–1
South West	7	7	0
East of England	7	7	0
London	5	11	–6

Note: A ‘+’ indicates a higher percentage of homes than children in homes, and a ‘–’ indicates a lower percentage of homes than children in homes.

As the table above shows, there are also a number of regions where demand (number of children placed by that region) and supply (number of homes in that region) are particularly out of balance.

“I think it’s all been covered. I work in this area and was a social worker in fostering for the council for seven years prior to coming into this job role. There are a lot of inconsistencies across this area. Introducing standards, I welcome as it will help maintain a standard of all providers, help safeguard these young people and ensure they are receiving quality support.”

Service Manager of a 16+ support provision

Above: extract from “Department of Education - Introducing national standards for independent and semi-independent provision for looked-after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17 Government consultation response December 2021”

Data for Figure 5: Type of need that homes stated they could accommodate by sector, as at 31 March 2020

Area of need	Number of homes	Private	Voluntary	Local authority
All homes	2,146	1,773	97	276
Complex needs	1,999	1,679	78	242
Abuse and neglect	1,197	1,043	40	114
Learning difficulties	924	749	52	123
Autism spectrum disorder	508	435	33	40
Mental health problems	475	426	20	29
Physical disabilities	219	140	26	53
Complex health needs	111	76	14	21
Sensory impairment	76	48	17	11

Table 6: Reason for entering care matched to need accommodated

Reason for entering care	Need accommodated by a children’s home
Abuse/neglect	Abuse and neglect
Child’s disability	Physical disability
Child’s disability	Mental health problems
Child’s disability	Learning difficulties
Parental illness or disability	No match
Family in acute stress	No match
Family dysfunction	No match
Socially unacceptable behaviour	Complex needs
Low income	No match
Absent parenting	Abuse and neglect

The DfE data shows that just over 7,000 children were living in children’s homes on 31 March 2020:

- 6,300 lived in a home that was also identified in our needs data
- 4,300 entered care for a reason that matched to a need offered by a children’s home

3.8 CONCLUSION

The proposed children's care home use meets a national need identified in the evidence in this application.

The proposed use would not incorporate any external or internal alterations. The number of residents would not exceed the existing, as a result of the proposed change of use. Hence, no additional amenity impact and noise disturbance would be generated.

The proposed use will provide suitable accommodation to meet the needs of future residents. It preserves the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties as well as the character and appearance of the individual property while being sympathetic to the existing structure and its surroundings. The new function of the property will not only create a positive impact on the surrounding neighbourhood but also provide the children/young people with support for personal development and growth.

Having regard to the information as set out in this application, it is contended that planning permission for this conversion from Dwelling (Class C3) to a Children's Care Home (Class C2) should be granted.

“

I want all children to have the brightest future possible.
I will advocate for positive change for all children and
particularly those who are most disadvantaged.

”

~ Anne Longfield, Former Children's Commissioner for England

