

# COMMITTEE REPORT

Planning Committee on  
Item No

18 November, 2015

Case Number

**15/3702**

## SITE INFORMATION

**RECEIVED:** 26 August, 2015

**WARD:** Kensal Green

**PLANNING AREA:** Harlesden Consultative Forum

**LOCATION:** Knowles House, 51 Longstone Avenue, London, NW10 3UN

**PROPOSAL:** Continued use of the building as a hostel providing bed and breakfast accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis) for a temporary period of 2 years and 6 months

**APPLICANT:** Brent Council

**CONTACT:**

**PLAN NO'S:** See condition 2

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# SITE MAP



## Planning Committee Map

Site address: Knowles House, 51 Longstone Avenue, London, NW10 3UN

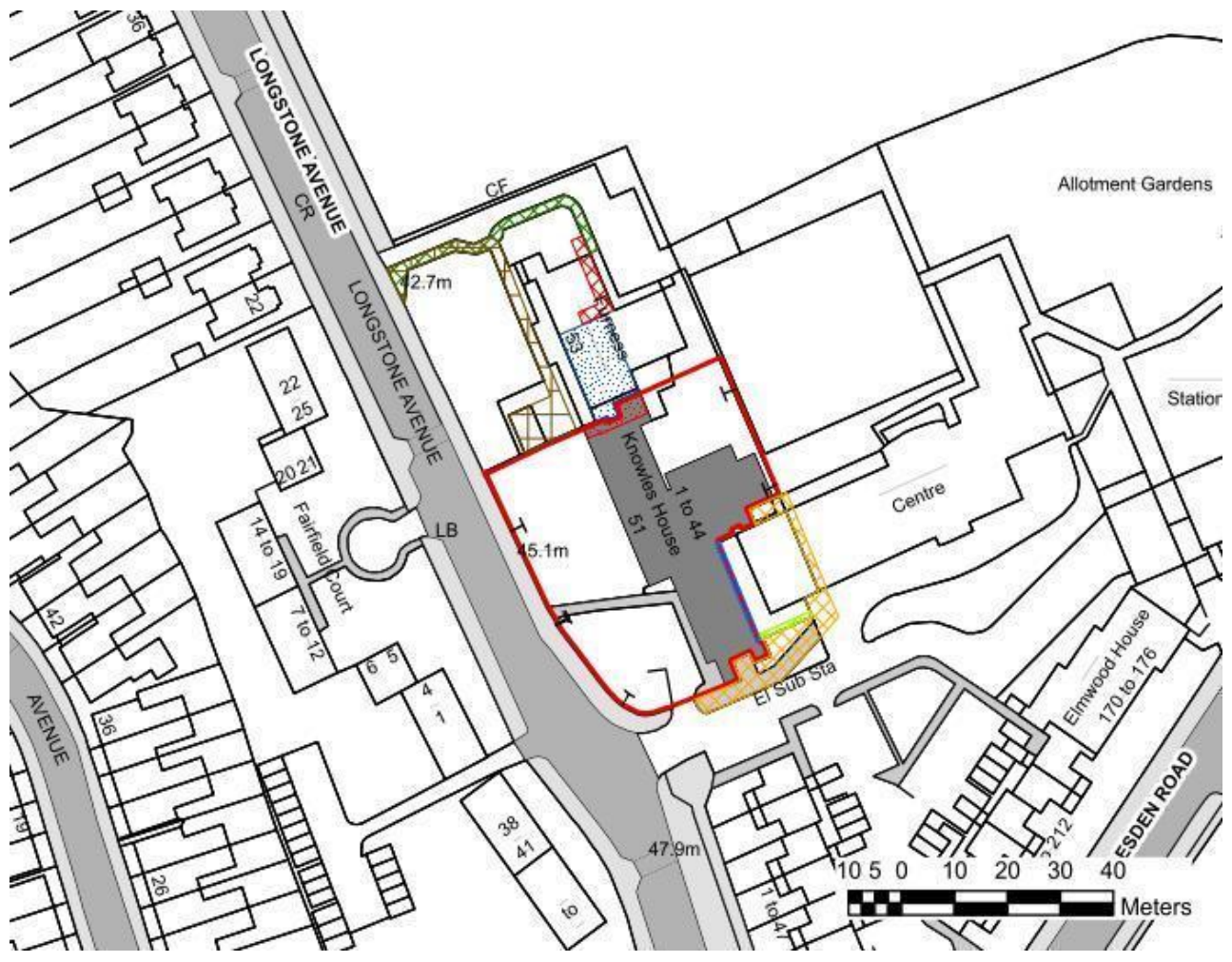
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This map is indicative only.

# SELECTED SITE PLANS SELECTED SITE PLANS

## Site Location Plan



# Ground Floor Plan



## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Approval** for 2 years and 6 months, subject to the conditions set out in the Draft Decision Notice.

### A) PROPOSAL

See description above

### B) EXISTING

The existing property is a three storey building which was constructed as a purpose built nursing home in the 1970s. It is located on the east side of Longstone Avenue and includes a garden area and car park. It is not a listed building nor is it within a Conservation Area.

### D) SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- The proposal is to meet an identified need to accommodate newly homeless families which Brent has a duty to house.
- No complaints have been received by the hostel management, the Local Authority or the Police in relation to the residents of the hostel in the 2 years that it has been operating.

### E) MONITORING

The table(s) below indicate the existing and proposed uses at the site and their respective floorspace and a breakdown of any dwellings proposed at the site.

#### Floorspace Breakdown

Primary Use	Existing	Retained	Lost	New	Net Gain (sqm)
Sui generis	1611	1611			

#### Monitoring Residential Breakdown

Description	1Bed	2Bed	3Bed	4Bed	5Bed	6Bed	7Bed	8Bed	Unk	Total
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## RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

13/1344 Granted on 11/10/2013

Change of use from care home (Use Class C2) to a hostel providing bed and breakfast accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis) for a temporary period of 2 years.

93/1692 Granted 01/01/1994

Full planning permission sought for the erection of single storey rear extension to Knowles House to provide senior citizens day centre.

LP56264866 Granted 08/11/1968.

Outline application for erection of neighbourhood centre comprising old peoples home, day nursery, flats and maisonettes, old peoples flat lets, social centre with central kitchen and ambulance station.

## CONSULTATIONS

143 properties were sent consultation letters and a site notice was put up at the site. In response a resident has submitted a petition against the proposal with 17 signatures, one objection has been submitted individually (also on the petition) and one comment in support of the proposal has been received.

The objection includes:

- There have been groups of young men talking loudly at night near neighbouring homes
- Evidence of drug use

- The hostel should be moved out of a residential zone

The petition states

- The level of ASB has increased since the opening of the hostel
- There have been several reported crimes in the last 12 months while there were none reported in previous years
- Intimidation of residents
- Littering of communal area making residents lives a misery

The comment in support states:

- The use has in no way been problematic - happy for it to continue to be used as temporary accommodation.

Detailed information from the management of the hostel and the police.uk crime maps have been reviewed and are discussed in the main report.

## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### London Plan - Further Alterations

**3.8 - Housing Choice** - Taking account of housing requirements identified at regional, sub-regional and local levels, boroughs should work with the Mayor and local communities to identify the range of needs likely to arise within their areas and ensure that other supported housing needs are identified authoritatively and co-ordinated action is taken to address this in the LDF and other relevant plans and strategies.

**3.14 - Existing Housing** - Loss of housing should be resisted unless the housing is replaced at existing or higher densities with at least equivalent floor space (this policy includes loss of hostels and accommodation that meets an identified need). The loss of housing to short term provision should also be resisted.

### Core Strategy 2010

**CP21 - A Balance Housing Stock** - the plan seeks to maintain and provide a balanced housing stock in Brent by protecting existing accommodation that meets known needs and by ensuring that new housing appropriately contributes towards the wide range of borough household needs including:

- Non self-contained accommodation to meet identified needs.

### UDP 2004

**H6 - Protection of Existing Affordable Housing (inc HMOs)**

**H10 - Containment of Dwellings**

**H12 - Residential Quality - Layout Considerations**

**H13 - Residential Density**

**TRN3 - Environmental Impact of Traffic**

**TRN4 - Measures to Make Transport Impact Acceptable**

**TRN 11 - The London Cycle Network**

**TRN23 - Parking Standards**

### Non-planning Guidelines

**Housing Strategy 2009-2014 - Shaping the Future of Housing in Brent.**

## DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

### Principle

1 The main policy relating to the principle of the continued hostel use of this accommodation is set out in CP21 of Brent's Core Strategy 2010. This policy seeks to maintain and provide a balanced dwelling stock to accommodate the wide range of Brent Households by, amongst other criteria, ensuring an appropriate range and mix of dwellings, including an appropriate non-self-contained accommodation, to meet the diversity of identified needs in the borough.

2 The use has operated for 2 years but prior to this the most recent use was as an elderly persons home which closed in 2011. The property was de-commissioned following a Council Executive decision because

the building was not fit for the purpose of providing permanent accommodation for elderly people, particularly due to the fact that the majority of rooms do not have private bathroom facilities and also share kitchens. This accommodation was re-provided in association with Housing Associations at the time.

3 Prior to the occupation of the use following the granting of the temporary permission the agent appointed to manage the scheme has refurbished the building without undertaking any remodelling of the internal or external structure. The arrangement provides 48 units for use as temporary accommodation, mainly single occupancy but also including some double, triple and quad rooms with a maximum occupancy of about 70 people at any one time.

4 Whilst the Council now has powers to discharge its homeless duty by making a private sector offer to applicants there has always been a requirement for interim emergency accommodation to meet some needs. In addition, the number of private sector properties procured for homelessness prevention has fallen by approximately 70% in the past few years making this step of the process more difficult. There is currently an average of 300 households each month living in bed and breakfast accommodation which demonstrates the significant need for affordable temporary accommodation. The property is used to accommodate newly accepted homeless households whilst 2nd stage temporary accommodation or settled accommodation is secured with an aim of this generally being for not more than a 6 week period.

5 Knowles House generally represents better accommodation than much of which is available in the private sector. It has therefore accommodated a large number of family sized households while they wait for permanent housing as it can accommodate 2-4 person households and has appropriate amenities for families. The site has been well used with a near 100% occupancy and it is apparent that the need for the use remains.

6 The proposal seeks to extend the permission until March 2016 in line with the proposed extension of the management contract.

7 In terms of principle and need the proposal is in accordance with Policy CP21 of Brent's Core Strategy 2010 and much needed to assist in meeting Brent's responsibility to accommodate of homeless families.

#### **Amenity of neighbouring occupiers**

8 The surrounding character is largely residential although the Roundwood Youth Club is to the rear and Roundwood Park just to the north.

9 There are residential properties to the west and south on Longstone Avenue and to the southeast on Harlesden Road. There are no extensions proposed to the building and as such there is no physical impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents in terms of daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook.

10 One objection and one petition have been received against the proposal and one neighbour has written in supporting the use. The comments made by neighbours in objection to the use, which are set out in detail in the consultation section above, relate to noise, littering and general anti social behaviour. Conversely, a neighbour has written in support of the application having experienced no problems during its 2 years.

11 The latter comment reflects the applicants view on the management arrangements for the hostel over the last 2 years. The management of the hostel have received no complaints regarding the behaviour of residents and there have been no other issues from Local Authority inspectors, local residents or the Police.

12 The management arrangement includes a CCTV and entry/exit system which the agents indicate can be monitored remotely. There will continue to be 24 hour on-site management cover and the ability to respond to any complaints if they arise. External lighting security of the perimeter of the building is also included.

13 Many of the residents placed in Knowles House are families with young children and the Director of Altwood, the management company, advises that they do not often have partners in the property.

14 Neighbours to date do not appear to have reported any incidents to Altwood, the Council or the Police making it very difficult to establish who has been involved. BHP have been asked to review the management position in terms of the properties to the south.

15 If reports were to be made and it was understood that residents of the hostel were affecting neighbours with anti social behaviour (ASB) the management would be able to respond appropriately and it is suggested that a condition be included referring to the scope for tenancy arrangements to be terminated if this were

found to be the case.

16 The petition suggests that crime reports have increased in the last 12 months. The hostel has been operating for 2 years but officers have also looked at the police crime maps of both ASB and general crime in the ward and the figures show a year on year decrease.

Reports from August	All crime	ASB
2015	133	44
2014	140	45
2013	156	54
2012	207	77
2011	212	85

17 The maps do not show an increase in crime in the immediate vicinity of application site either so the comment that reports of crime has increased is unsubstantiated.

18 Altwood report that some issues of damage experienced by the hostel, have been connected, by CCTV, to Roundwood Youth Centre. Officers do not have any formal information regarding this but have enquired with the police.

### Transportation

19 The application site is located on the eastern side of Longstone Avenue, a local access road which is not defined as being heavily parked. The site lies within CPZ "HW" which operates 08:00 – 18:30 Monday to Saturday, and has moderate accessibility with a PTAL rating of level 3. No tube or rail stations are within 960m walk of the site, but seven bus routes are available within 640m of the site.

20 Parking standards for care homes and hostels both fall under standard PS13 of the UDP-2004. This standard allows up to 1 car space per 10 bedrooms for care homes and 1 car space per 16 bedrooms for hostels, plus one space per five staff.

21 In the earlier application highways officers recommended that 6 parking spaces be marked out including a wheelchair accessible space, and this has been implemented to the front of the building with access off a private road off Longstone Avenue. Cycle stands have also been installed. No objections have been raised relating to this provision which indicates that it is meeting needs.

### Conclusion

22 The proposed temporary use of the premises as a hostel is considered to be in accordance with the relevant planning policies as set out above. Accordingly approval is recommended subject to the conditions set out below. The applicants have sought a further temporary period and this will allow the position to be reviewed.

### Neighbours comments

Neighbour comment	Officer response
There have been groups of young men talking loudly at night near neighbouring houses	Para's 11-18
Evidence of drug use	Para's 11-18
The hostel should be moved out of a residential zone	The use utilises an otherwise vacant building as set out in para 2. The site is occupied, in the majority of cases, by families with children and a residential area is appropriate.
The level of ASB has increased since the opening of the hostel	Para's 11, 14, 16-18



There have been several reported crimes in the last 12 months while there were none reported in previous years	Para's 11, 14, 16-18
Intimidation of residents	Para's 11-18
Littering of communal area making residents lives a misery	Para's 11, 14, 16-18

# DRAFT DECISION NOTICE



# Brent

## DRAFT NOTICE

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (as amended)

### DECISION NOTICE – APPROVAL

Application No: 15/3702

To: Denish Patel  
Brent Council  
Brent Civic Centre  
Engineers Way  
Wembley  
HA9 0FJ

I refer to your application dated 26/08/2015 proposing the following:  
Continued use of the building as a hostel providing bed and breakfast accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis) for a temporary period of 2 years and 6 months  
and accompanied by plans or documents listed here:  
See condition 2  
at Knowles House, 51 Longstone Avenue, London, NW10 3UN

The Council of the London Borough of Brent, the Local Planning Authority, hereby GRANT permission for the reasons and subject to the conditions set out on the attached Schedule B.

Date:

Signature:

Head of Planning, Planning and Regeneration

#### Notes

1. Your attention is drawn to Schedule A of this notice which sets out the rights of applicants who are aggrieved by the decisions of the Local Planning Authority.
2. This decision does not purport to convey any approval or consent which may be required under the Building Regulations or under any enactment other than the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

DnStdG

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR APPROVAL

- 1 The proposed development is in general accordance with policies contained in the:-

Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

Relevant policies in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan are those in the following chapters:-

Housing: in terms of protecting residential amenities and guiding new development

Transport: in terms of sustainability, safety and servicing needs

- 1 This permission shall be for a limited period, expiring on 31st March 2016 when (unless a further application has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority) the use hereby approved shall be discontinued.

Reason: The proposed use is considered to be acceptable only on a temporary basis to accommodate an existing and exceptional need for accommodation of this type in accordance with Policy CP21 of the London Borough of Brent LDF Core Strategy 2011.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawing(s) and/or document(s):

Site Plan

Ground Floor Plan

First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Liz Sullivan, Planning and Regeneration, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5377