MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	141872/LP/2025
Date registered valid:	11 January 2025
Proposal:	Use of dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) as a children's care home (Use Class C2) for one child.
Address:	145 Charlestown Road, Manchester, M9 7BR
Ward(s):	Charlestown Ward
Applicant:	O'Neill SAFESPACE4U Ltd
Agent (if any):	Robert Parle
Case officer:	Robert Tyrer Tel: 0161 234 4068 Email: robert.tyrer@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	
Date of recommendation:	24 February 2025

Application details

Type of application: Certificate Lawful Development Proposed

Development type: Certificates of lawfulness

Date of site visit: Not Required

Standard consultations:
No consultations have been printed and sent.

Neighbour notifications
No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice
No site notice has been produced

Press advert
No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building and area

145 Charlestown Road is located in the Charlestown area of Manchester, near the junction with Grange Park Road and opposite Boggart Hole Clough. This property is a two-storey, four-bedroom terraced house, which is a common type of housing in this neighbourhood. The area is primarily residential, featuring a mix of terraced and semi-detached houses.

The property has both front and rear gardens. Although there is no off-road parking, there are no parking restrictions on Charlestown Road or Grange Park Road. The area is well-connected by public transport, with regular bus services and a nearby train station (within a 5-minute drive or a 30 minute walk) providing easy access to Manchester city centre and other parts of Greater Manchester.

Listed building: Not applicable.

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of development

The applicant is seeking a certificate of lawful development to allow the use of dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) as a children's care home (Use Class C2) for one child.

Consultations & Notification Responses

None Required - There is no statutory requirement to consult third parties, including neighbours. Any views expressed by third parties regarding the planning merits of the case, or whether the applicant has private rights to carry out the proposed operation, use, or activity, are irrelevant when determining the application.

Issues

Planning History

There have been no previous planning applications at this address.

Issues

Legislative Issues

Sections 191 and 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provide for anyone (not just a person with a legal interest in the land) to apply to the local planning authority (LPA) for a lawful development certificate (LDC). A certificate is a statutory document certifying:

(1) in the case of an application under section 191, the lawfulness, for planning purposes, of existing operations on, or use of land, or some activity being carried out in breach of a planning condition; or

(2) in the case of an application under section 192, the lawfulness of proposed operations on, or use of land.

The onus of proof in regard to (1) is firmly on the applicant and the issue of a certificate will depend on the on factual evidence provided about the history and planning status of the building or other land and the interpretation of any relevant planning law or judicial authority. The relevant test of the evidence in this matter is “the balance of probability” and the applicants own evidence does not need to be corroborated by independent evidence. If the LPA have no evidence to contradict the applicants version of events or make them less then probable, there is no good reason to refuse the issue of a certificate.

In regard to (2), this provides that, if the LPA are supplied with information satisfying them that the use or operations described in the application would be lawful, if instituted or begun at the time of the application, they shall issue a certificate to that effect; and, in any other case, they shall refuse the application.

In short, the purpose section 192 is to enable any person who wishes to find out whether any proposed use or operations would be lawful to apply to the LPA for that purpose.

The application needs to describe the proposal with sufficient clarity and precision to enable the LPA to understand (from a written description and plans) exactly what is involved in the proposal; and to submit whatever supporting information or legal submission that are to be relied upon in order to satisfy the LPA that a certificate should be granted for the proposal.

In making their decision on an application under section 192, the LPA ask themselves the hypothetical question - "If this proposed change of use had already occurred, or if this proposed operation had commenced, on the application date, would it have been lawful for planning purposes?" In doing so, the LPA will not only consider whether the proposal would involve "development" requiring an application for planning permission, but whether it would involve a breach of any existing condition or limitation imposed on a grant of planning permission which has been acted upon, and which therefore constrains what can be done on the land. The LPA will not make a proposal fit a scenario; the only question is whether the proposal made by the applicant is lawful at the time of submission.

The Application

This application is pursued under subsection (1) of section 192, which provides for an application to determine whether any proposed use or operations would be lawful for planning purposes.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order provides that, where no more than six residents will live together as a single household where care is provided, the lawful use is Use Class C3 (b). The word “Care” equally applies that of Class C2 which is defined as follows:

- Use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within Class C3 (dwellinghouses)),

- Use as a hospital or nursing home,

- Use as a residential school, college or training centre.

This application seeks a Certificate of Lawful proposed Development for the use of the property as Use Class C2. As the existing lawful use is Class 3 (a), under normal circumstances there would be no permitted change to Use Class C2. Therefore, it is necessary to make an assessment based on a ‘fact and degree’ as to whether there is a material change of use.

In this case as described above the proposal seeks to house one vulnerable child aged between 7 and 17 years of age. In terms of staff there would be a Registered Manager on site and small team of support works who would be on site on a rota basis, with a maximum of 3no staff (including the registered manager) being on site at any one time.

The registered manager will be on site Monday to Friday between the hours of 09:00 to 17:00 and is responsible for the overall management and operation of the home.

The support workers will work on a weekly rota basis, to ensure the continuous care and support for the child. One member of staff is required to sleep at the property overnight. Duties include cooking meals, assisting children with schoolwork, transporting children to school and appointments, and providing emotional and physical support.

The planning statement mentions that visitors to the site will be very limited. Specifically:

- Social Services: A member of the Social Services team is required to visit once every six weeks.
- Ofsted: An Ofsted visit will take place every 12 months.

These visits are part of the regulatory and oversight requirements for the operation of the Children’s Care Home.

The question as to whether a semi-detached 3 bedroom dwellinghouse fell within Use Class C2 or C3 was considered in the High Court in North Devon District Council v First Secretary of State [2003]. In the judgement of Mr. Justice Collins was clear on the facts of that particular case, that carers who do not live but who provide, not necessarily through the same person, a continuous 24-hour care cannot be regarded as living together and that, whilst there would be less than 6 residents, the children, without at least one adult living with them at the premises, would not be capable of being regarded in the true sense as a household.

In his judgement, Mr. Justice Collins went on to reason that in the case before him, where three children would reside and be cared for by non-resident staff in a three-bedroom semi-detached

property, the use would seem to clearly fall within Class C2 of the 'UCO 1987' as a 'residential institution' which includes a home that provides care for children.

As such it is accepted that the proposed use here is C2, but it would not be materially different to that of a C3 dwelling house and therefore would not result in a development requiring planning permission.

Lastly there are no known conditions attached to any previous planning permission which would restrict the use in such a way as to prevent any such change being made.

Other Legislative Requirements
Equality Act 2010
Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations
This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved polices of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation:

Article 35 Declaration

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The use of the dwellinghouse as a children's care home (Use Class C2) for one child would not be development consisting of a material change of use, as set out in Section 55 of the Act, and would therefore not require planning permission.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Coal Authority - Surface Coal Resources - Name: Coal bearing strata at surface
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH AREA