



Response Statement to Objections

Florinee Homes Ltd would like to respond officially to the objections from the Parish Council, an online comment, and the Highways team to our planning application (H01-0651-23) for Change of Use from Dwelling C3 to Residential Institution C2 for Croft House, 98 Stonegate, Cowbit PE12 6AH.

Florinee Home Ltd would like the planning team to consider the following points:

Our environmental risk assessment, a legal requirement from Ofsted, has highlighted the following physical changes that need to be implemented to the property exterior to ensure the safety of our young people and staff:

- Removal of existing foliage that currently blocks road view from all road frontage areas of the property.
- Installation of wooden fence extending the length of the property frontage allowing space for large electric gate wide enough to allow two cars to pass at the same time. Fence installation will block the current entrance closest to the roundabout leaving just one entrance further towards the village.
- Installation of CCTV cameras at the front of the property to monitor driveway area.
- Two driveway safety mirrors at the electric gate entrance that allows everyone to see clearly both ways up and down the road without any need to step onto the road.
- 1.5m hard standing pathway across the full frontage of the property taken from our property meterage and maintained by our staff. This will give a safe area for our young people and staff to stand whilst waiting to cross the road to the grass verge on the other side of the road should this be necessary.
- Secure fence surrounding all the property.
- Outdoor security lights.
- With the clearing of the foliage, the new fence and the new electric gate, there will be sufficient space for staff to park their cars whilst on shift and for visitors to the property to park their cars. There will be absolutely no necessity to park on the road causing any traffic issues.

Standard company processes, required by Ofsted, that keep our young people safe:

- Assumptions have been made that our young people will need to access the local bus stops for school transport. This assumption is incorrect as in our experience, young people who are placed with us tend not to attend mainstream schools due to their behaviours and disabilities (autism, ADHD, delayed learning, and social anxieties) and therefore transport to and from their education placement is done either by contract taxi or by staff. Therefore, there is no danger or necessity for them to be walking on the road to the bus stop five days a week during term time.
- The company structure is such that staff shifts start at 8am and end around 9.30pm or at the latest, one member of staff will leave at 11pm. Other staff will then remain and sleep in the property and leave shift the next morning around 9.30am. Therefore there will be no issues from our staff regarding adding to early morning or late rush hour traffic through the village.
- It is company protocol (and Ofsted legislation) to perform extensive checks on any young person who is offered a placement with us. These checks include behaviours in the home, matched against other young people present and behaviours in the community. We will ensure that where possible, we match the young people who stay with us with community expectations.
- It has been assumed that the young people who are placed with us will have unsupervised free time in the village. The assumption is incorrect as most of our young people who start



their placement with us are between the ages of 12 and 14 and therefore, they would not have unsupervised free time. Should they wish to visit the village for a walk, they will be accompanied by a member of staff who will ensure that they use the newly created pathway at the front of the property as a safe place to cross the road to the grass verge the other side.

- Young people in placement will only receive unsupervised free time when they reach the age of 16 at which stage, they will in our experience, prefer to choose free time in either Peterborough or Spalding where there are more facilities for them. They will be transported there by staff. Due to the lack of leisure facilities and amenities in the village, it is highly unlikely that any of our young people would want to visit the village. If they do, then they would be accompanied by a staff member.
- We have an On Call system that ensures that a senior member of staff is available 24 hours a day should there be a need for additional support. Senior team members and company directors are accessible to all neighbours and parish councillors who may wish to express any concerns or compliments.

Concern regarding neighbours:

- The two-family homes under construction are being built by the previous owner of Croft House who was fully aware of the children's home plan when he sold us the property. Hence, no objection to the planning application from these properties.

Community engagement opportunities:

- The ignoring of the current speed limit from traffic travelling through the village is a concern for all and so it is the intention of Florinee Homes to work closely with the Parish Council and the Highways team to support any plans to enforce and improve this situation for everyone's benefit.
- We will also work closely with the Parish Council and the Highways team should there be an opportunity to create a footpath between Croft House and Mill Drove North if there are additional residential properties created along Stone Gate.
- It is company policy for the home, its staff, and its young people to integrate with local community projects and we would welcome this opportunity. In Peterborough, we take an active interest in the local Park (Central Park) as one of our Directors is the Secretary of the local Friends of Central Park group. Our young people are very involved with a local animal charity called Merrylegs Animal Trust at Whittlesey, where they volunteer and help look after the animals during school holidays and at the weekends. The young people and staff at Croft House will be looking for similar opportunities to support and volunteer with local community groups in the Cowbit and Spalding areas.
- It is also company policy and an Ofsted requirement to develop a close working relationship with local police teams (who are invited to attend the home and meet our young people), health professionals and schools.

Our experience:

Florinee Homes was established in January 2017. After much planning, our first home was opened in November 2017. This was Jefferson House, which was originally a semi-independent supported accommodation home but in November 2021, it became an Ofsted

registered children's home. Our second home, Madison House, was opened in August 2019 as a registered children's home. Both homes are in the centre of Peterborough.

Jefferson House was awarded a Good grading following their Ofsted inspection in November 2022 and Madison House was awarded an Outstanding grading following their Ofsted inspection in June 2022. We are very proud of the standards that our management team and their staff achieve within our homes and expect to deliver the same standards at Croft House.



Florinee Homes Ltd

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Madison House is situated on a very busy road near Peterborough city centre. The current practices to safeguard our young people (like the ones described in this document) along with the fence along the road, and the electric gate have proved to be successful measures in preventing any safeguarding issues for the young people who have been placed with us since 2019 – four years ago. This example has been used as evidence that our standards of care and safe practices ensure the safety of our young people.

Please take the opportunity to visit our website www.florineehomes.co.uk or our Facebook page www.facebook.com/FlorineeHomes to read more about our company and what we do.

Conclusion

We hope that we have supplied suitable responses to the objections raised to our planning application and that with consideration of our responses, the Planning Committee will approve our application for Change of Use.

Submitted by:

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6th September 2023