Ar Cúram Limited
Richard House
Sorbonne Close
Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 6DA

Our Ref: ARCURAM

Planning Development Services
Town Hall & Civic Offices
Westoe Road
South Shields
South Tyneside
NE33 2RL

Date: 11th December 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Planning Application – Change of Use from dwelling (C3) to Children's Home (C2) at St Michaels Vicarage, Westoe Road, South Shields, NE33 3PD

I refer to the above Planning Application submitted on behalf of Ar Cúram Limited and enclose a location plan, parking plan, current floor plan drawings and proposed floor plan drawings, neighbours notified, copy of letter to neighbours and our covering letter outlining our proposal and our services. Please note that the application fee has also been paid through the planning portal under this submission.

Ar Cúram are applying for Planning Permission to change the use class of the property at St Michaels Vicarage, Westoe Road, South Shields, for the purpose of a residential home to support a maximum of five children and young people.

Proposed Development

We are seeking planning permission to change the use class from Private Dwelling Home (C3) to a Children's Home (C2) (for a maximum of five children).

The house will be registered with Ofsted and the five children will be looked after and supported in accordance with regulations set out in The Children's Act. The management of the house will be subject to the regulatory controls of Ofsted with formal management / quality / performance inspections conducted on a regular basis.

Our children will be aged between 8 – 17 years old and supported by three / four members of staff during the day / evening with two persons on wakened nights. Additional management presence will be provided by the registered manager and a wider on-call team who are available to offer support 24/7 (evenings, weekends and holidays).

Description

Our application relates to a detached 7-bedroom, two storey property located on Westoe Road, South Shields. The Vicarage is located in an established area lying less than a mile from the town centre and in close proximity to a number of local schools, a supermarket and serviced bus route which makes it an ideal setting to nurture children.

Internally, the property is arranged at ground floor level as a hallway, TV lounge, conservatory, dining room, living room and kitchen leading to a large courtyard. Additionally, there is a bedroom and WC. We plan to keep the existing layout but change the double bedroom to an office space and add a utility room to the store area behind the kitchen. To the first floor are six double bedrooms, a bathroom with separate WC and a walk-in storeroom off the landing. We plan to add en-suite facilities to three of the bedrooms and use one as a night office which would be the only adjustment to the upstairs layout.

Externally, there is an attached brick built, flat roofed single garage with additional storeroom. To the front of the property is a driveway / parking area for St Michaels and All Angels Church and their extensive garden area, laid to lawn with borders. To the rear, is an enclosed garden with lawn, well-established planted borders and trees. The driveway and parking spaces are more than adequate for sic cars with manoeuvring ability within the site. There will also be ample room for the parking of bicycles or motorcycles / scooters within the property curtilage (store area in the courtyard).

The surrounding residential houses are a combination of detached / terraced brick housing in a diverse range of styles; no significant external changes are planned for the property therefore, our proposal would have no adverse aesthetical impact from the street. The house will maintain its own distinct appearance which is in keeping with its current standing.

The house will be similar to that of a 5-bedroom family home and would not have any detrimental impact on local amenities. The difference between our proposal and a ‘normal’ family home, is that a ‘normal’ family home is managed by parents / kinship carers. As such, we consider that the development will safeguard the amenities currently enjoyed by the neighbouring properties and on this basis, it is considered that in pure neighbour amenity terms it will reasonably satisfy the requirements of Section 15 of the NPPF.

Policy Context

There is significant pressure on each local authority to meet the needs of all vulnerable children by sourcing appropriate resources that will allow them to remain within their own locality and community. It is fairly evident that unregulated care accommodation has grown out of the pressures in the care system, therefore, there are increased numbers of children being accommodated in services that do not meet the necessary legislative context or framework.

Our proposal and desire to commission localised support services for children & young people demonstrates that we are both listening and responding to the recommendations set out in the most recent Independent Review of Children’s Social Care. It is widely accepted that local placements are difficult to resource, therefore, it is our intention to establish a local resource that can support current deficits of such services in the area whilst allowing young people to have a say in where they live by providing a service to meet their assessed needs.

We believe our application is supported by the following local planning policies:

SD1 Sustainable Development
SD2 Locational Policy
SD3 Development Limits
SD4 General Development Principles
LS1 Urban Area Spatial Strategy

For decision making purposes, we would ask the Planning Officers to approach their decision on our proposed development in a positive way that demonstrates a proactive approach; an approach that will help to secure resources to improve the economic and social outcomes for vulnerable children

and young people. The property will have sufficient parking to accommodate staff, it is in close proximity to local amenities and supported by a local bus service. In Conclusion, our proposals have considered both National and Local Planning Policy Compliance and we believe that permission should be granted to change the use class from C3 (Dwelling Home) to C2 (Residential Institution).

Company Overview – Ar Cúram Limited

We are a small independent care provider who offer residential care and support for vulnerable children and young people aged 8 to 17 years old. Our aim is to provide support to children and families referred by Local Authorities the support to remain and live in their own communities. Our current children's homes are situated in Teesside, however we have plans to develop resources for those children and young people in South Tyneside who require care and support whilst living in close proximity to their school, friends and family.

Our houses are registered with Ofsted for two / four / five children, however, we do not always have that number in residence at any one time. When any vacancies become available in our houses, the local LA's are always given priority in these instances. This would also be our aim for St Michaels Vicarage; the house would be designated for children from South Tyneside predominantly with consideration given to Children from bordering / partnering Local Authorities in the instances when a placement match cannot be determined locally.

Our first residential house was commissioned November 2018 at The Willows (Eaglescliffe) followed by The Beeches (Redcar) May 2020, The Oaks (Thornaby) October 2022 and The Maples (New Marske) August 2023.

Ofsted judgements for our established houses are as follows.

The Willows – Outstanding in all areas,
The Beeches - Good in all areas,
The Oaks – Good in all areas with aspects of Outstanding
The Maples - Has not been inspected as it is a new service.

Zak McIlhargey (Managing Director) oversees all aspects of the operational management at Ar Cúram as the Responsible Individual for the four houses. He has over thirty years' experience working in the social care / social work sector with a proven history of developing 'Outstanding' and 'Excellent' care and education services with charitable / private organisations / local authorities.

Our referral and selection processes are extremely robust, and we would like to assure you that we will have excellent quality management teams who will always give due consideration to our neighbours and their peace of mind.

The children that we look after may have experienced neglect, trauma, abuse, exploitation or various other forms of harm. These harmful experiences may have had an impact on the child's ability to control their impulses or to learn new behaviours, therefore, effecting long term change in children and young people is our ultimate objective. We support children by making them feel valued, by showing them that we care for them, by helping them to understand and manage their challenging behaviours, by showing them how to build resilience in adversity and by demonstrating new coping strategies in order to manage any future disappointments they may face in life.

Our Staff Team

Our skilled staff team are committed to offering support and opportunities for personal development to each child or young person in an environment that is suitable to meet their assessed needs. We work very closely with other agencies and professionals including schools, colleges, GPs, community

nurses and consultants. This means that all professionals involved in a young person's life take a consistent approach in the continuity of their care.

As an organisation, we recognise that we are accountable for the well-being of the young people who may live at St Michaels Vicarage, therefore, the staff teams in our houses are trained in reforming young people's behaviour by applying behaviour management methodology.

Applying this approved methodology ensures that we do not rely on the Police or emergency services to manage our children. The staff team in the house have embraced our model of parenting and management which has been recognised in our Ofsted Inspection Reports.

"Positive behaviour is promoted in the home using verbal praise. This encourages the children and young people to regulate their behaviour because it makes them feel good about themselves, rather than because they receive a gift for good behaviours"

We acknowledge that there may be instances when children may 'go missing from home' and as you can see from the statement above from Ofsted, these unauthorised absences are managed by the staff members from the home as well as they would do with their own children. Our staff teams and management follow and adhere to the guidance set out in 'Children who go missing from their home or in care' policy and the 'Philomena' protocol.

As we currently have a number of established children's services fully operational, we have a very robust on-call management system to support our services. That team currently comprises of, 4 x Registered Managers, 4 x Assistant Managers, 8 x Senior RCCW's and 1 x Head of Service. This group are available 24/7 to manage and support any matters that need to be addressed (evenings, weekends and holidays). St Michaels Vicarage management team would also form part of this group which provides us with the confidence that we will continue to manage our services responsibly and effectively.

The maximum number of children that will be looked after at St Michaels Vicarage will be five, however, it is not necessarily the case that there will always be five children living in the house at any one time; this will be dependent on the specific needs of the children after a full comprehensive assessment.

We understand that residential houses have a number of people coming and going on a daily basis however, we would minimise the frequency by encouraging professionals to make the necessary arrangements for meetings to take place elsewhere when it's appropriate – this will reduce the number of instances for SW's or external professionals to visit the house. The same sentiment would apply to deliveries of nonessential goods, our office in Thornaby is operational and fully staffed Monday to Friday to take delivery of stationery and domestic goods that can be collect accordingly.

We will have seventeen FTE staff members within the team who will work on a rotational basis covering a designated shift pattern - the number of staff members on duty will be no more than four if there were five children in residence at any one time.

Early	07.30 – 18.00
Day	09.00 – 21.00
Night	20.00 – 07.30

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information at zak@arcuram.com or call me on 07950 305946

Website – www.arcuram.com