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Southampton Home Gets Approval for Nursery Conversion After 30 Years as Family Residence

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A long-standing family home in Southampton is set to partially transition into a childcare facility, following planning approval for a nursery on the property's ground floor. The change marks a significant residential-to-commercial adaptation in the city's Sholing area, reflecting broader trends in how private homes are being repurposed to meet local service demands.

Located on Portsmouth Road, the same family has occupied the property since 1992. In late 2023, they submitted an application to convert the ground level into a small-scale daycare centre while continuing to live upstairs. After a lengthy review, Southampton City Council approved the proposal, subject to several planning conditions aimed at managing the impact on the surrounding neighbourhood.

In a statement accompanying the application, the homeowners shared their personal connection to the site, saying, “We have raised three children and created many cherished memories,” and clarified their intention to continue residing in the building.

The approval represents a growing pattern of mixed-use residential properties, particularly in suburban areas where childcare is in high demand. According to the family, the Southampton Early Years and Childcare team confirmed a shortage of nursery places in the city, which supported the application.

The proposed nursery will initially cater to children aged two to three, with plans to include infants as young as nine months later. Operating weekdays from 7.30 am to 6 pm, 50 weeks per year, the facility will accommodate up to 25 children with staggered arrival and departure times to reduce traffic disruption.

The site will also see some practical real estate adaptations. The current garden will be restructured to provide an outdoor play area, while four on-site parking spaces must be maintained under planning conditions. Additionally, a pool vehicle will be introduced for staff transportation and to assist with child drop-offs during poor weather, a measure designed to relieve pressure on local parking.

Although generally welcomed by planners, the project drew concern from at least one local resident. The resident criticised the site’s location in a “high traffic area” and warned of “insufficient parking if the residents’ allocated spaces are occupied, and the nearby off-road parking is private property.” Such concerns are familiar to real estate professionals working with mixed-use conversions in built-up areas.

Southampton’s planning committee placed a strict cap on the number of children to avoid “over-intensive use of the premises” and to “safeguard the residential amenities of nearby residential properties.”

From a property development perspective, the case highlights how traditional homes are being adapted to meet evolving community needs. It also underscores the importance of maintaining a careful balance between commercial opportunity and residential harmony, particularly in areas with high demand for services like childcare.

For investors and developers, the successful conversion of this Portsmouth Road home could set a precedent for similar small-scale, home-based business models across Southampton's residential zones. As planning departments continue to receive applications for multi-use domestic properties, community-sensitive proposals that address local needs and infrastructure constraints are increasingly likely to succeed.