

43/2008/091

MS LYDIA DANIEL-BAKER

ERECTION OF MEDICAL CENTRE WITH ATTACHED SERVICES, INCLUDING CAR PARKS, EXTERNAL WORKS AND LANDSCAPING AND FORMATION OF ACCESS TO MANTLE STREET, LAND TO SOUTH AND WEST OF 112B MANTLE STREET (PART OF TRINITY FARM), WELLINGTON (REVISED PROPOSAL)

313427/120216

FULL

PROPOSAL

The site is located on the south side of Mantle Street approximately ½ mile west of Wellington town centre. It is currently agricultural grazing land with a number of parkland trees. It extends to just over 1 ha in size and slopes up away from Mantle Street. The site is generally bounded on three sides by residential development, but is open on the fourth to the remainder of the agricultural land. The location of the site is approximately 550 m from the existing Bulford site.

A previous planning application was granted in July 2007. The current application was accompanied by a Design & Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Tree & Landscape Survey & Assessment, Ecology / Habitat Surveys, an Ecological Management Plan, Transport Survey and a Trial Pit Investigation Report.

The proposal provides for the development of a new medical centre and attached services, including car parks, external works, landscaping and new access onto the public highway. The proposed development will replace the practice's existing facility at Bulford. The existing medical centre is being used to full capacity with no slack to absorb new initiatives. The applicants state that the present building is approximately half the size recommended by current guidelines and parking is not sufficient. They consider that it is impractical to extend the existing building or add another floor. The site is too small to provide the temporary accommodation in portacabins and re-build.

Access to the site from Mantle Street is in the same position as the previous application. Re-use of rubble stone for new walls and the addition of ashlar piers will aim to create a new gateway, in keeping with the adjacent entrances. The external form of the two storey building has been designed as a series of interlocking traditional gabled roofs, with those towards the centre of the site being single storey to minimise the effect of the building on the views up the slope to the south. The aim is that it will be perceived as part of the existing built form rather than viewed as an intervention into the wider protected landscape. In this position, the impact upon the site and the effect upon the open views will be kept to a minimum. The main entrance will be visible from the new site entrance from Mantle Street and the single storey arm of the building on the west side has been angled to facilitate this. The scale of the building reduces on the west side to reduce to a minimum the effect

upon the views. Materials are to be reconstructed stone and brick for the walls and artificial slate for the roofs.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY views awaited. FIRE OFFICER means of escape and access for appliances should comply with the Building Regulations and water supplies / fire hydrants should conform to British Standards. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY object as the proposals are not compliant with the guidance provided in PPS25, specifically in terms of the management of surface water. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment offers few suggestions into the management of surface water and the supporting trial pit information shows that soakaways are not a feasible method at the site. Would wish to see some proposals for attenuation on site and proposals for sustainable drainage systems. SOMERSET PRIMARY CARE TRUST support. The existing premises are cramped and not fit for purpose in the longer term, currently operating at 88% of the recommended space for the current size of practice and having significant problems with providing sufficient consulting space. The existing premises do not permit the development necessary for the size of practice required. This will prevent services from being developed and delivered more flexibly. The proposed size of the premises sits within the guidance provided by the PCT in line with national policy and the site provides for future expansion should this be needed. The list size has been growing steadily, alongside improvements in practice performance. The longer term developments proposed in the TDLP and in the RSS will require additional medical services capacity. The Board has approved this proposal as one of nine priority schemes to be delivered within the next year. This scheme is required to ensure high quality, accessible services can be delivered to an expanding population enabling patients to continue to have a choice regarding the practice they wish to register with. SOMERSET ENVIRONMENTAL RECORDS CENTRE no statutory or non-statutory sites and species at the application site. 5 County Wildlife Sites within 1km of the site. One or more legally protected species found within 1km of the site. NATURAL ENGLAND mitigation measures for slow worms should be assured through planning conditions. Comfortable that the ecological management plan will mitigate for the impacts of the development on the biodiversity issues identified by the ecological consultants. WESSEX WATER connection may be made to the nearest public foul sewer in Mantle Street for foul drainage and to the nearest public surface water sewer in Mantle Street for surface water drainage. There is sufficient capacity to serve the site. There is a water main in the vicinity of the site. AVON & SOMERSET POLICE physical and electronic security measures need to be considered, in particular external doorset and window security, security lighting, intruder alarm protection, CCTV and access control within the building. The winged design of the building creates a secluded area with very limited natural surveillance and should be fenced off or thorny shrubs planted. WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL recommend refusal because the Councillors feel it is the wrong place for a medical centre.

CONSERVATION OFFICER no objection provided that adequate screening with trees / shrubs along the Mantle Street end of the site at least seeks to maintain this edge of Conservation Area setting as a green space. LANDSCAPE OFFICER there appears to be no proposal to soften the impact of the new building or parking. T11 is a significant tree of mature age that is unlikely to be able to respond to significant

ground disturbance. However, the proposed car parking will have a significant impact on the trees root protection area. Recommends removal of some of the car parking spaces to reduce this impact. Further observations following receipt of amended plan – main concern is that from the parkland and drive to Foxdown House, the car parking and surgery will be prominent and detrimental to the parkland and green wedge setting. Therefore recommend a laurel or other evergreen boundary hedgerow along the southern and western boundaries of the surgery and the southern boundary of the car park. Would also like to see additional tree planting within the park setting to break up the form of the surgery building. NATURE CONSERVATION OFFICER support the objectives of the submitted Ecological Management Plan and advise that the implementation of the plan is conditioned. FORWARD PLANNING UNIT the policy issues relevant to the proposal are the same as those in relation to the original scheme, so the comments previously made are still relevant to the current application. By shortening the building and limiting it to the lower, northern part of the site, the amended scheme takes it further from the boundary of the Special Landscape Feature than in the original proposals. This will reduce the impact of the development on the Special Landscape Feature and also the Green Wedge. In relation to these policy considerations it is, therefore, an improvement on the earlier scheme, thus shifting the balance of considerations in favour of the proposals.

THIRTEEN LETTERS OF OBJECTION concern that the proposed entrance to the revised site has been moved and now faces into property – this will cause noise from people and doors; the buildings and entrance is now much closer to property; position of the entrance should be reconsidered and relocated to face into the field; road and path will be closer to property – this will increase noise and affect security and privacy; moving the proposed pharmacy closer to property will add to noise and disturbance compared to simply medical centre visitors; revised shape of building makes it wider, blocking out rear facing aspect taking out light and view of what is left of the field; building should be sited somewhere more suitable for the whole town; there are more suitable sites available; horror and dissatisfaction at the planning process and the lack of political or democratic justice in this case; site totally unsuitable; amazed that consideration was ever given to the site, given the strategic importance of the green wedge designation; so few of the Planning Committee show any interest in Wellington – their approval is based on ignorance and indifference rather than judgement being based on local knowledge; the extra traffic and the access will cause further problems to the overall traffic flow in and out of Wellington; Mantle Street narrows drastically towards its western end and is already heavily traffic laden; site is too far from the town centre, particularly for pedestrian access by the elderly; lack of public parking if the health centre car park is full; would need to be a more frequent bus service; parking for existing local residents in Mantle Street does not seem to have been carefully considered – should be free parking for them; west side of town is already served by a health centre – Luson; due to the Co-op taking over Somerfield, the present Co-op supermarket site in Longforth Road car park may become available – this site would be far more useful and appropriate for the town and would be more cost effective; flood risk from the car park; will not benefit anyone other than the doctors who are selling the land of their existing practice; concern about the proposed design, in particular the double-height atrium; another hazard for the school children to negotiate; impact on natural habitat, flora

and fauna; additional carbon emissions as a result of additional car journeys; Mantle Street has a history of flooding.

ONE LETTER OF SUPPORT delighted, hurry up and build it.

LETTER OF REPRESENTATION request that fence on boundary be erected prior to work commencing; delighted that the scheme incorporates some attempt to support the vast amount of wildlife that lives and feeds in this field;

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy STR1 of the County Structure Plan contains policies related to sustainable development. Policy 49 of the same Plan relates to the transport requirements of new development.

Policy S1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan sets out general requirements for new developments. Policy S2 of the same plan addresses design issues. Policy S7 states that outside defined settlement limits, new building will not be permitted unless it maintains or enhances the environmental quality and landscape character of the area and provided certain criteria are met. I am satisfied that all reasonable attempts have been made to find a suitable site within the settlement limits closer to the town centre and consequently I consider that the principle of a site just outside the settlement limits is acceptable. Furthermore, a previous planning permission for a similar proposal on the site was granted last year. The site is within an area designated as Green Wedge in Policy EN13 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan. This policy states that development which would harm the open character of the green wedge will not be permitted. The site is part of a very much larger area of countryside. It is also affectively surrounded on three sides by development (the 'open' cemetery to the north is not included within the Green Wedge designation). The purpose of the designation is to prevent the coalescence of Wellington and Rockwell Green. I consider that the integrity of the Green Wedge, in particular the overriding reason for the designation, will not be adversely affected by the proposal.

ASSESSMENT

The current proposal is substantially the same as the previously approved scheme in terms of the accommodation and supporting information. However, a different design approach has resulted in a more compact footprint, not extending as far up the slope and therefore minimising the visual impact upon the landscape.

The site lies beyond the settlement limits of the town of Wellington where there is strict control over new development, and exceptions are only allowed where a proposal can be seen to be justified. In this instance, the applicants have demonstrated that the current site at Bulford is too small for their expansion requirements and that an extensive search for an alternative site has shown that the current application site is the most appropriate in terms of suitability and likelihood of coming forward within a reasonable time frame. There are proposals for

redevelopment of the Bulford site together with the adjacent public car park for a food store.

Most of the application site falls within an area designated as Green Wedge in the Taunton Deane Local Plan. The aim of this designation is primarily to prevent the physical coalescence between Wellington and Rockwell Green. I consider that the proposal has been sensitively positioned and designed to minimise the loss of land within the green wedge. The proposal will maintain and increase opportunities for views into the green wedge and to the Special Landscape Feature of Foxdown Hill beyond. It also minimises any impact on existing mature trees and increases the potential for attracting wildlife. The Ecological Management Plan submitted with the application seeks to protect existing parkland trees, provide additional parkland trees, diversify grassland sward, plant a boundary hedge, avoid killing or injuring slow worms and enhance conditions for bats.

The County Highway Authority did not raise any objection to the principle of the development when the previous, similar application was being considered.

With reference to the views of the Environment Agency, the applicants confirm that they are proposing a sustainable drainage system for the site. The applicant's Engineer is to submit a drawing addressing the concerns.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to receipt of further drawings addressing the concerns raised by the Environment Agency and the further views of the Environment Agency thereon, the Development Manager be authorised to determine the application in consultation with the Chairman and if permission is GRANTED be subject to conditions of time limit, materials, hard and soft landscaping, retention / protection of trees, no service trenches beneath canopy of trees, no felling, boundary treatment, as planted landscaping plan, storage compound, adherence to Ecological Management Plan, access, Travel Plan, parking, underground services, details of surface water drainage. Notes re disabled access, energy / water conservation, secure by design, CDM regulations, contact Fire Officer, need for S278 Agreement with CHA, soakaways or other method of surface water drainage and wildlife.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:-

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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NOTES:

