Expiry Date - 10/07/2023

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0695/23 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Findon Dental Care 181 Findon Road Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Proposed two storey rear (West) extension to create three new dental surgery rooms.

Date of site visit: 07.06.2023

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to one half of a pair of semi-detached properties occupying a splayed position on the north side of the chamfered slip road at the junction of Findon Road (A24) with Vale Drive. The properties date from mid-20C and are brick-built with tiled, hipped roofs to the side and rear and front gable features. Both properties have shopfronts at ground-floor fronting onto the public highway. The application property is currently vacant but was formerly used as a dentist's surgery 'Findon Dental Care' at ground and first-floor. The attached unit to the south (No.179) is in use as a vet surgery with a residential flat above (No.179A).

A driveway to the north side of No.181 leads to a tarmacked rear car park.

Adjoining the site to the north is the petrol filling station and shop. Adjoining to the rear is 2A Vale Drive, a bungalow built on higher ground to the west.

The property is not listed nor within a conservation area. There are no trees on the site.

The site is close to but not within the designated Findon Valley Medium Scale Local Shopping Centre.

Proposal

Permission is sought for a part single part 2-storey extension to the vacant unit to enable it to operate once again as a dentists' surgery. The ground-floor element of the extension would be 4.85m deep and 6.8m wide. The 2-storey element would be L-shaped, infilling the existing recess on the north side and having a depth of between 4.8 and 3.4m. It would be 5.8m wide, set in 1m on the south side. The 2-storey element would have a replacement pitched and hipped roof with a new ridge sitting just below the main roof ridge (leaving a narrow section of flat roof over the existing 2-storey rear element adjoining the

south side boundary). The ground-floor element would have a lean-to pitched roof wrapping around the south side and rear (west) components. The accommodation would consist of 4 surgeries (including 1no accessible surgery) reception and accessible WC on the ground floor and 2 surgeries plus waiting room, 'decon' room and staff facilities (lockers, WC, shower room) on the first-floor.

A covering letter explains that the objective is to provide up to 37,500 units of NHS Dental Activity and that the proposed extension would facilitate this and bring huge benefits to the local community in terms of access to NHS dental treatment for patients.

A supporting letter has been received from the Commissioning Manager for NHS England South East confirming that the proposal would enable the set-up of a 7-surgery [sic] practice delivering much-needed NHS dental services to the local population.

Relevant Planning History:

WB/00/00988/FULL Change of use (of ground-floor) to dental surgery. Opening times limited to between 08.30 and 18.00 Monday to Saturdays. Limited to 1 dentist operating form the premises.

WB/05/0955/FULL Change of use of first floor flat (No. 181A) from residential to dentist surgery (in connection with existing ground floor use). Refused on grounds of insufficient car parking facilities detrimental to highway safety, harm to neighbour amenity caused by increased activity, noise and disturbance including increased vehicle movements in Vale Drive, and loss of a dwelling.

WB/06/0010/FULL Change of use of first floor flat (No. 181A) from residential to a dental surgery (in connection with existing ground floor use). Re-submission of previously refused application WB/05/0955/FULL by way of reducing the total number of surgeries shown on previous application from four to three. Approved subject to conditions limiting use of first floor as 1 dentist's consulting room (3 overall including ground-floor) and ancillary office/consulting room.

Consultations:

WSCC: The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection, commenting:-

"*This application is for the erection of a two-storey rear extension providing three new dental surgery rooms. The site is located on Findon Road, an A-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 40 mph in this location.*

No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangement. Whilst the proposed additional surgery rooms will likely see a material intensification of movements to and from the site, the LHA does not anticipate that this would lead to a significant impact on the local highway network.

Three car parking spaces are to be retained. Any overspill parking that may arise from the additional surgeries would have to be accommodated on-street. Whilst on-street parking is limited in the area, there are comprehensive parking restrictions in place on the nearby roads that prohibit parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. The LHA does not anticipate that the proposed development would lead to a detrimental highway safety concern, nor give rise to a parking capacity issue in this location. However, the LPA may wish to consider the potential impacts on on-street parking from an amenity point of view.

WSCC does not have specific parking standards for this use type. However, weight is given to the fact the site is sustainably located, and close to bus stops that provide regular services. Clients are not anticipated to need to rely on the private car to visit the site. A cycle store to the rear of the site will help promote the use of sustainable forms of transport.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal."

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM8
National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2021)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Policy DM8 of the Local Plan supports improvements to health facilities to ensure they meet the needs of local communities where it is demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties.

As made clear in the supporting letter, the proposal would provide much-needed NHS dentist services to the benefit of the local community. Consequently there is no objection in principle subject to the effects on the visual and residential amenities of the area, and on highway safety.

Visual Amenity

The proposed extension is sited to the rear building but would be visible in public views from Vale Drive to the south and across the forecourt of the petrol filling station to the north. However, it has been designed to complement the appearance of the existing building and would be subservient and scale, form and massing. The proposed rear roof component would no

longer read as a paired feature with that of the attached building at No.179, but this would not in itself detract from the character of the area. The residual element of 2-storey, flat roof (1.7m deep by 1.3m wide) adjoining the common boundary with No.179 would not be conspicuously noticeable in the streescene, nor so unsightly as to significantly detract from the overall appearance of the property.

Residential Amenity

The most affected properties are No.179 and 2A Vale Drive.

The ground-floor of 179 is in commercial use and despite the scale, depth and height of the proposed extension in close proximity to the common side boundary there would be no adverse impacts on this property. No.179A is in residential use. The first-floor element of the proposed extension would have some enclosing effect on the outlook from the nearest window in the rear of No.179A which serves a habitable room. However, having regard to its orientation to the south of the proposed extension, the hipped roof form of the latter and the 'set-in' from the common boundary, it is considered the effect would not be harmfully overbearing nor result in an unacceptable loss of light.

No windows are proposed on the south side walls of the proposed extension.

The rear curtilage of 179 is mostly hard surfaced, used for parking, with soft planting to the edges including a silver birch tree (the main trunk of which has been 'topped') growing close to the common boundary with No.181. Owing to the alignment of the boundary which angles outward, away from the footprint of the proposed extension, it is not considered the tree would be affected (and which in any event is not considered worthy of a TPO).

2A Vale Drive lies on higher ground to the west. There are several windows in the east elevation at ground-floor which are visible above the boundary fence facing toward the rear of No.179. The boundary fence to the rear of No.181 has been raised in height to over 2m and a pergola structure attached to part of it. A large rear box dormer has several windows facing north. The main aspect of windows in the rear of the proposed extension would face north-west (and would not directly overlook the ground-floor windows in the east side of 2A). It is noted that the first-floor rear windows (serving a shower room and WC) would in any event be obscurely glazed.

There are 2no redundant a/c units fixed to the existing rear wall of No.181. No details of new external plant have been provided and this can be controlled by condition, along with opening hours, in the interests of safeguarding the residential amenities of the neighbouring occupiers.

Highway Safety

Parking spaces are not currently marked out within the tarmacked rear curtilage. The submitted plan shows provision of 3no car parking spaces and a cycle store.

Access to the rear car park is from the chamfered slip road in front of the building. Access to the petrol filling station adjoining to the north is at the junction of the slip road and Findon Road (A24). On street parking around the busy junction with the petrol filling station and Vale Drive is controlled by double yellow lines. There is a parking bay (Mon-Sat 8.30am – 6pm '1 hour no return') on the slip road directly in front of Nos 179/181.

Vale Primary School is located at the western end of Vale Drive and the junction with Findon Road (A24) is busy during school drop off and collection times, with heavy on-street parking all along Vale Drive and surrounding residential roads at these times.

Notwithstanding the planning history associated with the former use of this property as a dental surgery the LHA has not raised any objection on highway safety grounds noting the existence of parking restrictions nearby and giving weight to the sustainable location of the site on a bus route and provision of cycle parking facilities.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Matching materials
4. No external plant
5. Opening hours 0800-1900 Mon-Fr 0900-1300 Sat
6. Implement secure covered cycle storage

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 06.07.2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 6 July 2023