Expiry Date - 08/08/2025

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0771/25 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **St Lawrence Surgery 77 - 79 St Lawrence Avenue Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Demolition of outbuilding and construction of detached building with two consulting rooms and waiting area**

Date of site visit: 09.07.2025

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: Y – Amended Plan

Site and Surroundings

The site relates to a large, detached building used as a GP surgery, located on the corner of St Lawrence Avenue and Rectory Road. The immediate vicinity of the site is predominantly residential in character although a commercial/ shopping parade lies in close-by South Street to the south of the site.

A TPO (No.30 of 1998) relates to a number of established trees across the site.

Proposal

The application, which has been amended, seeks permission to demolish an existing detached outbuilding (formerly a garage but currently used for storage) located adjacent to the eastern site boundary, and to erect a single-storey 'annexe' building located on a similar footprint to provide 2 additional consulting rooms and a waiting room.

An ASHP included as part of the initial submission has since been omitted.

As supporting statement from the Practice Manager states:

"We are a designated GP training practice, supporting the education and development of future GPs. However, we are currently unable to take on an many trainees as we are approved for due to a lack of room capacity. This is a missed opportunity not only for us as a practice but for the wider NHS workforce, particularly at a time when primary care recruitment and retention are critical.

Our patient list continues to grow in line with local population needs and we have responded by recruiting more clinicians to maintain safe, timely access

to care. However this has placed considerable strain on our current space. With over 80% of our consultations still delivered face-to-face adequate room availability is not a luxury – it is essential for patient safety, privacy and continuity of care.

The proposed annexe will allow us to make more efficient use of our existing footprint, with minimal disruption to the surrounding area. It will directly support improved access to healthcare for local residents and enhance our capacity to train the next generation of GPs."

Relevant Planning History:

The application property, originally comprising 2 neighbouring dwelling houses has been considerably enlarged and extended over a period of many years. There is a staff car park at the north end of the site, and a small patient car park in the Southwest corner, both accessed from Rectory Road. There is also a separate ambulance parking space accessed from Rectory Road.

The most recent planning history AWDM/0443/18 relates to the development of 3no additional consulting rooms within a single-storey extension in the far south-eastern corner of the complex which has since been implemented.

Consultations:

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

"*The site is located on St Lawrence Avenue, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph.*

WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) was previously consulted regarding highway matters for this site for application AWDM/0443/18 (Demolition of entrance porch and existing bin store area and construction of single storey extension to south east corner to create 3 no. additional consulting rooms with new entrance ramp and provision of new bin store to north east elevation), of which no highway safety or capacity concerns were raised. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) permitted the application.

The current submission proposes the removal of an existing storage garage and erection of a building comprising two additional consulting rooms. Given the scale of the existing practice, it would not be anticipated that the proposals would result in a significant material vehicular intensification of use of the access point onto the maintained network, or the nearby highway network.

27 existing car parking spaces are to be retained, as outlined in the Application Form. WSCC Parking Standards does not outline a specific amount of car parking to be provided for medical/health services, instead requiring a site-specific assessment based on travel plan and/or needs. The LHA recognise the site's sustainable location that is well accessible on foot, by cycle or by public transport, whereby staff and visitors need not rely on a private car for travel to and from the site. The proposals for two

additional consulting rooms are not anticipated to significantly increase parking demand over what already exists at this site.

In addition, if cars were to park on-street, there are parking restrictions in place on the nearby roads that prohibit cars from parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. As such, no concerns would be raised in this regard, although the LPA may wish to consider the potential impacts from an amenity point of view.

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 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal."

Adur and Worthing Councils

The **EHO (Public Health)** has no adverse comments on the proposal.

Representations:

2 objections to the initial proposal have been received from residents in nearby Haynes Road and St Lawrence Mews raising the following concerns: -

- Over intensification of the site in a residential area;
- Limited accessibility by public transport from the broad catchment area which includes West Durrington resulting in high demand for parking which cannot be accommodated on site and resulting in high levels of on-street parking on surrounding roads causing congestion and inconvenience to local residents (blocking of driveways, dangerous manoeuvres).
- The Applicants should be required to pay for and maintain access protection lines for all properties in St Lawrence Avenue, Glebe Road, Haynes Road and Twitten Way for a distance of 150 metres from the site.
- Building location and dimensions: Concerns about reduction of light which could be addressed by an alternative siting, building footprint and roof design.

The application has since been amended as suggested by the neighbour in St Lawrence Mews who has no further comment to make noting that the Surgery has been helpful and the (amended) result is positive.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SP3, DM5, DM8
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

There is no objection in principle to proposals to expand the existing GP surgery in accordance with policy SP3(b) which states that the Council will support proposals for new and improved health services and facilities in locations where they can be accessed by sustainable transport modes.

In addition, policy DM8(a) states that the Council will support 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

The key considerations are the effects of the proposed development on the visual and residential amenities of the locality and on highway safety.

Residential Amenity

The existing store building consists of a combination of brick and rendered elevations under a ridged, gabled roof covered in plain tiles. It is sited close to the eastern site boundary directly opposite the rear (west) elevation of 6 St Lawrence Mews. The latter is sited approximately 1.5 metres from the shared boundary. The boundary is marked by timber panel fencing with trellis fencing on top. The eaves/gutter of the store building is approximately 0.4m above the top of the trellis fence. The ground-floor windows in the west elevation of No.6 serve habitable rooms.

Following discussions the footprint of the proposed replacement building has been amended. It would be 8.41m long and 4.45m wide sited 0.16m from the shared site boundary. It would have a ridged and hipped tiled roof 3.9m high, finished in painted render on 3 sides with brickwork on the north elevation. The accommodation would consist of 2 consulting rooms and a small waiting room accessed from the west side by a ramp within the existing site (serving the existing adjacent consulting room annexe permitted under AWDM/0443/18). The proposed new consulting rooms would have windows to the north and south. There would be no window openings on the east side wall or roof of the building.

The proposed building would extend no further north or south than the existing outbuilding. The new ridge would be no taller than the existing ridge but positioned marginally to the west (owing to the wider footprint of the proposed building). The roof of the proposed building would have ‘hipped ends’ to the north and south instead of the existing gabled roof form. Consequently, it is considered the physical effects of the proposed building on the receipt of light to and outlook from the nearest windows in the rear of No.6 would be no worse than existing. If anything, the inclusion of hipped ends and a rendered finish to the east elevation would offer some improvement in terms of receipt of light/reflected light.

No.5 St Lawrence Mews is attached directly to the south of No.6. Only a small part of the proposed (and existing) building is sited in directly front of the west elevation of No.6. The physical effects of the proposed building would be no

worse than existing and the hipped roof would offer some enhancement to receipt of light and outlook compared to the existing gabled roof form.

The proposed use as consulting rooms would generate additional comings and goings compared to the current low-key storage use. However, the entrance on the west side of the proposed building will be off the existing access ramp (to be adapted) leading to the existing consulting room annexe in the south-west corner of the site. There may be some minor increase in noticeable activity associated with the use, but for the most part comings and goings will be screened from neighbours by the presence of the proposed building itself.

The existing boundary fence will be sufficient to safeguard against adverse overlooking of the neighbouring residential properties at an oblique angle from the windows in the north and south elevations.

Visual Amenity

The footprint of the surgery building has expanded substantially over the years as necessary to make provision for healthcare facilities needed to serve the local community. Recent developments have infilled much of the former space between the original buildings and the southern and eastern site boundaries. However, the proposed annexe building has been deliberately designed to reflect the scale, appearance and modest proportions of the existing outbuilding and would not be substantially different in terms of its visual impact in views from neighbouring properties.

The proposed replacement building will be set back a good distance from St Lawrence Avenue and would have no significant impact, if any, on the street scene.

The northwest corner of the proposed building will be sited 0.7m closer to an existing cherry tree (not subject to the TPO) which is shown as being retained. Details of tree protection measures and special foundations necessary to minimise damage during construction works can be secured as a condition of planning permission.

Parking and Highway Safety

There are currently 27 onsite car parking spaces. However, as noted by the third party, the majority of these are reserved for staff with 9 spaces for patients (including 2 disabled spaces). There are 3 further disabled parking spaces on Rectory Road in front of the site entrance. On-street parking is available on Rectory Road and St Lawrence Avenue with double yellow line road markings at the junctions. These roads can be heavily parked up at busy times, extending into nearby Haynes Road and South Street. The catchment area for the surgery extends from West Durrington in the west, Arundel/Warren Road to the North, Broadwater Road to the East and Tarring Road to the south. The surgery is within reasonable walking distance of West Worthing rail station and there are a number of different bus routes serving

the local area also within walking distance. Although the surgery premises is reasonably accessible by public transport it can be expected that some patients will continue choose to travel by private car or taxi. No additional on-site car parking provision is proposed and there is no obvious capacity for additional parking to be provided within the site. Notwithstanding the concerns raised by the third party, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) has raised no objection on highway safety grounds.

Although the inconvenience caused by inconsiderate parking on surrounding roads is noted, the LHA considers the small scale of the current proposal would not justify an insistence on providing the additional highway marking measures suggested by the third party. On the other hand, the Highway Officer has pointed out that the resident could explore making a community TRO. [This is separate from the planning process and would require the support of other residents and the local councillor.]

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Materials as stipulated
4. No openings to east side elevation
5. Hours of construction limited to Mon-Fri 0800 to 1800 and Saturday 0900 to 1300.
6. Agree details of tree protection measures and any special foundations necessary to safeguard the nearby cherry tree shown on the approved drawings as retained.

Informative

Pro-Active Amendment

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 11.08.2025

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 12 August 2025