Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/2034/22 Recommendation: Approve

Site: Ball Tree Surgery, Western Road North, Sompting

Proposal: Installation of 1no. modular building on western side of rear car park to provide treatment rooms, including removal of raised planted area and garage in rear car park and reconfiguration of parking area

Date of Site Visit: February 1st 2023

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

The application relates to the car park to the south/south west of the Ball Tree Surgery. It is proposed to redesign the car park to allow for the siting of 1no. modular building to be used to provide an additional 4no. treatment rooms. The building measures 15.1m in length, a maximum 7.9m wide at its southern end narrowing to 4.1m wide at its northern end and 3.3m high at its highest point, lowering to 3.1m on the western boundary. A demountable steel ramp for access is proposed at the southern end of the building projecting eastwards into the car park . A covered walkway is proposed leading from the ramp, around the southern and eastern edge of the car park to the entrance of the existing surgery building.

The buildings are to be located on the western boundary which will result in the removal of a raised planted area and the felling of two trees.

In support of the application the applicants have explained:

"*Lancing Primary Care Network (PCN) are working at above capacity. With new housing driving demand and with an increase in complex cases from the local population, the capacity at surgeries is critical. Ball Tree Surgery serves the West and Central population of Lancing and Sompting. It is split over 2 sites, and both are only 50% of the NHS Commissioner's recommended size for clinical rooms. All other permanent and temporary options within the surgery and PCN estates have been explored and put into place where possible. Clinical room space has become critical and needs a new solution now while long term options, outside of the PCN control are being explored with Adur and Worthing Council.*
This planning application is ….. to help resolve the critical lack of clinical rooms and associated space in the practice and the wider Lancing Primary Care Network. The

buildings will provide a place to work for current staff who are unable to see patients face to face, instead of remote consultations. They will improve the current access to rooms due to the current access issues in the main building, as well as provide additional larger rooms for clinical staff to use beds for assessments with patients. It will also allow for the completion of the planning recruitment of additional staff roles (pharmacists and paramedics etc), in line with national government strategy, to improve the current lack of staff in the Primary Care system.
It is proposed that an additional staff will be recruited over the next 12 month period. The surgery expects to employ 2-4 additional staff.
The treatment rooms will provide space for existing employees and those working remotely to be at the surgery which is a benefit for patient services."

The site is abutted to the west by dwellings in Trent Close, specifically No.7, which has an entrance door and window on the ground floor and two first floor windows facing the site.

Planning History:

Various applications approved to extend the surgery and car park

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority has no objection. The proposed development will likely lead to an intensification of movements to and from the site, but the LHA does not anticipate that this would be significant nor give rise to an adverse highway safety impact in this location.
The proposed siting of the modular building will result in a reduction in existing off-street car parking provision. However, the LHA acknowledges that the site is sustainably located and well connected by public transport. In the event that on-street parking does occur, there are parking restrictions on the nearby roads that prohibit vehicles from parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. The LHA does not anticipate that this would give rise to a highway safety concern or parking capacity issue in this location, but the LPA may wish to consider the potential amenity implications of a potential increase in on-street parking.
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 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal

Adur and Worthing Councils: Public Health: Recommend hours of working condition

Drainage: No objection on flood risk or drainage grounds. Due to the temporary nature of the proposed development, lack of deep foundations, and association with a doctor's surgery, we would recommend the approval of the application with conditions

Trees and Landscape: In my opinion this proposal should be re-considered to retain the Common Beech tree T1. The defects mentioned in the tree report are reasonably common for such a tree and by good management problems with kerbs drains etc can be alleviated.

The main problem with the tree is that it is in an awkward position to allow more car parking, given that the tree is visible from the main routeway of Western Road, I consider that its amenity outweighs the need for car parking spaces.

Southern Water: It appears that the applicant is proposing to abandon/divert a public foul sewer. Any public sewer diversion proposals shall be approved by Southern Water under Section 185 of the Water Industry Act. An application should be made.

Previous comments: The plan shows that the proposed development will lie over an existing 150 mm public foul and surface water sewer, which will not be acceptable to Southern Water. The exact position of the public apparatus must be determined on site by the applicant before the layout of the proposed development is finalised. It might be possible to divert the 150 mm public foul and surface water sewer, so long as this would result in no unacceptable loss of hydraulic capacity, and the work was carried out at the developer's expense to the satisfaction of Southern Water under the relevant statutory provisions.

Recommend condition: The developer must advise the local authority (in consultation with Southern Water) of the measures which will be undertaken to divert the public sewers, prior to the commencement of the development

Lancing Parish Council: Support the application subject to drainage issues being adhered to

Sompting Parish Council: Although the Council has no objection, it feels that the intensification of the site will cause concern with the increase in traffic activity and impact on parking in the area. We note the developers intend to replant the trees in a more appropriate location which we welcome

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 15, 18, 28, 33, 34, 36
National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy 33 supports improvements to community facilities, including healthcare facilities, to meet local needs. The expansion of the treatment rooms at Ball Tree Surgery are supported in principle therefore.

The relevant issues are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers, parking and access and the effect on the character and appearance of the area, including the loss of trees.

Visual amenity

The building will sit along the western boundary in the SW corner of the car park. It will be largely hidden from views from Western Road North but will be more visible from Trent Close. However, it will be positioned behind a boundary wall and will not be unduly intrusive.

The main visual change will be the loss of the two trees that are currently located in the middle of the car park. A Tree Assessment submitted with the application advises that the trees are not good specimens, growing in a narrow planting bed which hinders use of the car park. It is proposed to replace the trees with new planting to the front and rear boundaries.

The Council's Tree and landscape Officer would like to see the beech tree remain for amenity reasons. However, on balance, the loss of the trees, while regrettable, is considered to be justified in this case due to the need for the additional health facilities.

Residential amenity

The building will sit alongside the boundary with 7 Trent Close, which has its entrance door and a high level ground floor window on the side facing the surgery, plus two first floor windows. None of the openings are principal windows. There is a drop in ground level on the site and a boundary wall which will partly screen the building. It is to be positioned 1m from the boundary. On balance, it is not considered that the building will have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of 10 Trent

Close. Two windows are shown on the west elevation and these can be required to be obscure glazed by condition.

Parking and access

The proposal involves the rearrangement of the car park and the loss of some car parking spaces. No highway objection has been raised however as the site is considered to be sustainably located and well connected by public transport. In the event that on-street parking does occur, there are parking restrictions on the nearby roads that prohibit vehicles from parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. It is not considered that there would be a significant impact on amenity from a possible increase in on street parking as a result of this proposal.

Flood risk and drainage/impact on sewer

The application has been delayed for several months due to objections from Southern Water to building over a sewer. The position of the building was moved from the east side to the west side of the car park in an attempt to overcome this issue but the proposed ramped entrance will still run over a sewer. The applicants have explained that the ramp is not fixed but is moveable and, in the circumstances, it is considered to be unreasonable to withhold planning permission on this basis. A condition will be added to require the applicant to seek agreement with Southern Water prior to commencement.

In terms of flood risk, a FRA was submitted which the Council's drainage consultant is satisfied with and no objection has been raised on flood risk grounds.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard 3 year time limit
3. Landscaping
4. The developer must advise the local authority (in consultation with Southern Water) of the measures which will be undertaken to divert the public sewers, prior to the commencement of the development
5. All development shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted and approved Flood Risk Assessment (job no. 5917, revision B, dated April 2024), this includes the use of an attenuation tank that discharges to the surface water sewer at a rate of 0.5l/s and the use of resistance and resilience

measures, unless otherwise first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

6. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until details of the maintenance and management of any proposed sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority
7. Prior to the first use of the development a Flood Evacuation Plan, detailing the mapped evacuation routes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority
8. Parking spaces to be provided
9. Works of construction or demolition, including the use of plant and machinery, necessary for implementation of this consent shall be limited to the following times.
   Monday - Friday 08:00 - 18:00 Hours
   Saturday 09:00 - 13:00 Hours
   Sundays and Bank Holidays no work permitted
10. Obscure glaze west side windows.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation N

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 15 May 2024

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 17 May 2024