

APPLICATION REPORT – 21/01483/FULMAJ

Validation Date: 14 January 2022

Ward: Chorley North And Astley

Type of Application: Major Full Planning

Proposal: Erection of a part two storey/part single storey building to accommodate 24no. bed hospital ward and associated works (part retrospective)

Location: Chorley And South Ribble District General Hospital Preston Road Chorley PR7 1PP

Case Officer: Chris Smith

Applicant: Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Agent: Mr Daniel Hughes

Consultation expiry: 7 February 2022

Decision due by: 16 September 2022

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that this application is approved, subject to conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION

2. The application site is located in the settlement area of Chorley, as defined by the Chorley Local Plan Policies Map and it lies within the established grounds of Chorley and South Ribble Hospital in the southern part of the site. The site is currently used as a temporary staff car park, after the maternity and endoscopy ward building which previously occupied the site was demolished in 2020.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3. The application seeks planning permission for a two storey hospital building to accommodate a 24no. bed patient ward along with associated facilities. Works to construct the building are at a relatively advanced stage and therefore, the application is part retrospective.
4. The proposed building would be of modular construction and there would be car parking and hard and soft landscaping works around the building. It would be linked at first floor level to the rest of the hospital via an existing link which was retained following demolition of the maternity ward building.
5. The scheme would complement the existing facilities at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital by enabling an expansion of ward capacity in line with increasing demand.
6. Amended plans have been submitted. The original scheme proposed a part single storey / part two storey building, however, amended plans were provided for a two storey building.

REPRESENTATIONS

7. 2no. representations have been received citing the following grounds of objection to the proposed development:
 - Impacts on neighbouring amenity.
 - Loss of car parking.
 - Traffic and highway safety.

CONSULTATIONS

8. Chorley Council's CIL Officers – Have stated that the proposed development would be CIL liable if approved.
9. Lancashire Highway Services (LCC Highways) – Have stated that they are satisfied that the proposed development would not exacerbate any existing car parking or highway issues and they raise no objections to the proposed development.
10. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) – Have no objections to the proposed development.
11. Chorley Council's Waste & Contaminated Land Officer – Has stated that in this instance he has no comments to make.
12. United Utilities (UU) – Have no objections to the proposed development.
13. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) – Have stated that they object to the proposed development, see main body of report for more information.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the development

14. The application site is located in the core settlement area of Chorley. Policy V2 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 - 2026 states that within the settlement areas excluded from the Green Belt, and identified on the Policies Map, there is a presumption in favour of appropriate sustainable development.
15. Central Lancashire Core Strategy policy 1 (Locating Growth) seeks to focus growth and investment in a number of places, including the Key Service Town of Chorley.
16. Policy 23 (Health) seeks to integrate public health and planning and help to reduce health inequalities in a number of ways, including working with health care commissioners to support health care infrastructure and particularly to improve primary care and mental health care access and facilities.
17. Policy 25 (Community Facilities) seeks to ensure that local communities have sufficient community facilities provision by, among other things, working with public, private and voluntary sector providers to meet demonstrable need and encouraging and coordinating new provision at locations that are accessible by all modes of transport.
18. At paragraph 123 the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) provides, among other things, that Local Planning Authorities should support proposals that make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.
19. The principle of the proposed development is, therefore, considered to be an acceptable one, subject to material planning considerations.

Design and impact on the character and appearance of the immediate locality

20. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development, provided that the proposal does not have a significantly detrimental impact on the surrounding area by virtue of its density, siting, layout, building to plot ratio, height, scale and massing, design, orientation and use of materials.
21. The application proposes a two storey building. This would be a modular flat roofed building to provide ease and speed of construction as the modular system can be largely prefabricated and installed on site rapidly. The building would, therefore, be of relatively functional appearance and this is considered to be an acceptable design approach, particularly as various architectural styles can be found across the hospital site. Furthermore, it is not considered that it would have a significantly greater or more adverse impact on the visual characteristics of the wider hospital site than the maternity ward building which previously occupied the site.
22. To the south and east of the building there would be areas of hardstanding to provide staff car parking and to the west and south existing soft landscaping including grass verges and a small number of bushes and trees would be retained. There would also be asphalt pathways and access ramps to the entrances of the building which would link into the existing pedestrian infrastructure in the grounds of the hospital. It is considered that these arrangements would be in keeping with the existing configuration and layout of the wider hospital site.

Impact on neighbour amenity

23. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development, where relevant to the development the development would not cause harm to any neighbouring property by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing.
24. The proposed development would be approximately 31m to the north of the nearest neighbouring residential property at no. 109 Rookwood Avenue and this degree of separation would be adequate to ensure that there would be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the levels of amenity currently enjoyed by the occupiers of this and other properties located at Rookwood Avenue. Direct intervisibility between the building and the neighbouring residential properties located to the southwest at Foxcote would be restricted by mature trees located within the hospital grounds.
25. It is also noted that the site has been used as a staff car park and before this it was occupied by a hospital building. Both uses would have generated a degree of noise and disruption as a result of comings and goings. Consequently, the character of the immediate locality is such that some degree of noise disturbance is commonplace and whilst there are residential noise sensitive receptors capable of being impacted upon by the development in the immediate locality, it is not considered that the resultant noise would be so adverse so as to warrant refusal of the application.

Highway safety

26. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 states that developments must not cause severe residual cumulative highways impact or prejudice highway safety, pedestrian safety, the free flow of traffic, or reduce the number of on-site parking spaces.
27. LCC Highways have stated that car parking at Chorley Hospital can be problematic at times and as such it is essential that adequate car parking within the hospital grounds is provided to ensure that any surrounding roads are not adversely impacted upon. They have also stated that the developer has provided a plan indicating all existing car parking areas and the new parking associated with this proposal and based on a review of this information they are satisfied that the proposed development would not exacerbate any existing car parking issues.

Ecology

28. The Council's appointed ecologists at the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have assessed the application and have not raised any objections to the proposed development but advised that an informative note be attached to any grant of planning permission so that the applicant is aware that they must seek ecological advice should they find or suspect that the proposals will impact on protected species. They also stated that works that impact on habitats where nesting birds may be present (for example demolition of a building or works to trees and other vegetation including undergrowth like bramble), should not be undertaken in the main bird nesting season (March – August) unless suitable checks for active bird nests have been undertaken.

Community Infrastructure Levy

29. The Chorley CIL Infrastructure Charging Schedule provides a specific amount for development. The CIL Charging Schedule was adopted on 16 July 2013 and charging commenced on 1 September 2013. The proposed development would be CIL liable.

Drainage

30. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have stated that they object to the proposed development on the grounds that the applicant has provided peak run off calculations assuming that the site is classified as 'previously developed' in drainage terms. However, the North West SuDs Pro-Forma, applied by the LLFA explains that a site must only be classified as 'previously developed' with regards to drainage when the existing drainage system is to be used in its entirety.
31. In this case the development would not use the existing drainage system in its entirety and, therefore, the 'previously developed' Defra Technical Standards for SuDs (S3 and S5) cannot be applied to its design. Consequently, the LLFA advised that the applicant should provide amended drainage details to design the development to greenfield standards in drainage terms.
32. However, the applicant's agent has stated that the brownfield run-off rate is being met indeed this would be an improvement of approximately 75-80% relative to the existing situation. The agent has also drawn the Council's attention to the advisory nature of the LLFA comments which state that comments provided are advisory and it is the decision of the Local Planning Authority whether any recommendations are acted upon.
33. Furthermore, the applicant's agent has set out various reasons as to why draining the site at greenfield run off rates would not be feasible as follows:
- The amount of space required for attenuation is limited given that half the car park comprises below ground storm tanks.
 - The cost implications of having to significantly increase the capacity of these given that there is a limited budget for the development given the pressing needs of the NHS and particularly the significant pressures to create more bed space.
 - The further logistical issues further work would cause on the operation of the hospital.
34. Taking into account the arguments advanced by the applicant, the improvements with regards to run-off rates relative to the existing situation and the significant healthcare benefits to support the community which would occur as a result of the development particularly at a time when the NHS is facing significant patient capacity pressures, it is considered that cumulatively these factors outweigh the failure to achieve greenfield run-off rates.

CONCLUSION

35. The proposed development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing site or the surrounding area, nor would it cause any significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents, highway safety or ecology. It is, therefore, considered that the development accords with the Framework, policies 1, 23

and 25 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026. Consequently, it is recommended that the application is approved.

RELEVANT POLICIES: In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposal has had regard to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

There is a lengthy planning history and only the most recent applications are detailed:

Ref: 17/01110/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 11 January 2018
Description: Erection of healthcare sterilisation and decontamination unit.

Ref: 19/00162/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 22 May 2019
Description: Installation of lighting columns with phantom cameras, external cabinets, traffic poles, fixed barriers, payment kiosks and column protectors to facilitate the provision of a car park management system.

Ref: 19/00163/ADV **Decision:** PERADV **Decision Date:** 22 May 2019
Description: Application for advertisement consent for the display of 347no. non-illuminated car park signs.

Ref: 20/00768/DEMCON **Decision:** PERDEM **Decision Date:** 17 August 2020
Description: Application for prior determination for the proposed demolition of existing building and part demolition of first floor walkway

Ref: 20/01215/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 08 January 2021
Description: Construction of car park and perimeter fencing and erection of 6no. 6m high lighting columns and 2no. 5m high camera/communication columns to facilitate the provision of a car park management system

Suggested Conditions

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The external facing materials, detailed on the approved plans, shall be used and no others substituted unless alternatives are first submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, when the development shall then be carried out in accordance with the alternatives approved.

Reason: To ensure that the materials used are visually appropriate to the locality.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans below:

| Title | Plan Ref | Received On |
|--|----------|------------------|
| Site Location Plan | 3124 | 24 December 2021 |
| Elevations - Phase 2 | 2012 | 16 March 2022 |
| First Floor General Arrangement - Phase 2 | 2006 | 16 March 2022 |
| Ground Floor General Arrangement - Phase 2 | 2007 | 16 March 2022 |
| Proposed Landscaping Plan - Phase 2 | 1401 | 25 March 2022 |

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

4. No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Wild birds and their eggs are protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it illegal to kill or injure a bird and destroy its eggs or its nest whilst it is in use of being built

5. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.

Reason: To secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution

6. The drainage for the development hereby approved, shall be carried out in accordance with principles set out in the submitted Foul & Surface Water Drainage Design Strategy confirmed via email dated on 14/04/2022. No surface water will be permitted to drain directly or indirectly into the public sewer. Prior to occupation of the proposed development, the drainage schemes shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development and to prevent an undue increase in surface water run-off and to reduce the risk of flooding.