

APPLICATION REPORT – 17/00954/FULMAJ

Validation Date: 28 September 2017

Ward: Clayton-le-Woods And Whittle-le-Woods

Type of Application: Major Full Planning

Proposal: Erection of part three storey, part two storey, part single storey GP surgery, pharmacy and community cafe with associated car parking, access and landscaping following demolition of existing building

Location: Nature Trail Nursery Whittle-Le-Woods And Clayton-Le-Woods Parish Club 239 Preston Road Clayton-Le-Woods Chorley PR6 7PY

Case Officer: Mr Iain Crossland

Applicant: Ms K Ollerton

Agent: Mr Neil Ainsworth

Consultation expiry: 23 October 2017

Decision due by: 28 December 2017

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 Whittle le Woods and is in an established residential location on the A6 Preston Road. The site also comprises amenity grassland (front garden and lawn, rear grassland with scattered trees and shrubs), hardstanding areas (driveway and car park) and broadleaf woodland area. The existing building is a large building of traditional design style that was originally a parish hall but has evolved to include a children's nursery. The building also continues to be used by church groups and for other community based functions.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3. The proposed development involves the erection of a part three storey, part two storey, part single storey building comprising a GP surgery, pharmacy and community cafe with associated car parking, access and landscaping following the demolition of existing building.
4. Car parking would be located to the rear of the building, as it is currently, however the vehicular access would be relocated from the north side of the site to south side as part of the proposal.
5. The proposed scheme would allow Whittle-le-Woods GP Surgery (the applicant) to relocate their existing medical centre from 199 Preston Road, Whittle-Le-Woods, Chorley, PR6 7PS

to the site. This would enable the applicant to expand their practice in line with the growing needs of the surrounding community through the provision of consulting rooms, treatment rooms, office space, associated services and a pharmacy.

REPRESENTATIONS

6. Representations have been received from the occupiers of 5 addresses in objection to the proposed development. These relate to the following issues, which are summarised below:
 - Impact on highway safety
 - Impact on neighbour amenity through noise and disturbance
 - Impact on privacy
 - Issues with surface water run-off
 - What boundary treatment would be included?
 - Would lighting be included to the car park?
 - What maintenance would take place
 - A community café would not be a success and may be redeveloped for something else
 - What are the plans for the electricity substation?
 - Security provisions need to be considered
 - What is the timescale to completion?
 - Access to the car park should be prevented out of hours.
 - Impact on wildlife.
7. Representations have been received from the occupiers of 2 addresses in support of the proposed development.
8. A representation has been received neither objecting to nor supporting the application but asking that adequate controls are put in place to deal with the current rat infestations.

CONSULTATIONS

9. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit: Have no objection.
10. Regulatory Services - Environmental Health: Have no objection.
11. Waste & Contaminated Land: Have no objection
12. Lancashire Highway Services: Have no objection is raised to the proposal in principle. It is, however, considered that the cumulative impacts of the proposed development would be severe if the mitigation measures outlined are not implemented, in line with the NPPF.
13. Lead Local Flood Authority: Have no comments received.
14. United Utilities: Have no objection subject to condition.
15. Environmental Health Officer: Have no objection subject to condition.
16. Clayton le Woods Parish Council: Comment to Check the Charitable Trust Status of the current building and level of public consultation.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the development

17. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) sets out the three dimensions of sustainable development having an economic, social and environmental role. Paragraph 14 further identifies the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making, that means that the needs of the population are taken into account and for decision taking, where the Local Plan is absent or out of date that any adverse impacts should significantly outweigh the benefits for permission to be refused.

18. Paragraph 17 of the Framework sets out 12 'Core Planning Principles' that should underpin plan-making and decision-taking. One of these principles establishes that planning should: *"take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs."*
19. Policy 23 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy is supportive of schemes that help to reduce health inequalities, and in particular to support health care infrastructure.
20. The application site is located in the settlement area of Clayton le Woods. 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.
21. Policy HW6 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 seeks to protect community uses such as church halls, and states that planning permission will only be permitted where the criteria of the policy are met. In this instance, the proposed development is for a health centre, which also falls within the scope of policy HW6 and which this policy seeks to promote. As such an existing community facility would be replaced by a larger community facility, albeit of a different type, however, it is noted that the building also includes some ancillary community facilities, which would be more akin to those which would be lost. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposed development would be contrary to policy HW6 of the Local Plan as the quantum of community facilities provided on the site would be greater, which is of significant benefit to the community.
22. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 establishes the design criteria for new development. In relation to this particular proposal, the scheme must demonstrate how the proposed development would not prejudice highway safety, and that the highway impacts of the proposal would not be severe. New development must also comply with policy ST4 in relation to the Council's adopted parking standards policy.

Impact on neighbour amenity

23. The proposed building would be located approximately 9m to the north of the dwelling at 237 Preston Road. It is noted that the proposed development would replace an existing building that is taller and located closer to this dwelling. The proposed building would only include high level windows and windows to a stair well on the part of the building nearest to 237 Preston Road, which would not afford any unacceptable views over this neighbouring property. Although the proposed building would extend further beyond the rear elevation of the dwelling at 237 Preston Road, the scale and degree of separation are such that there would be no unacceptable impact on outlook, privacy or light when considering the existing situation.
24. It is noted that the proposed vehicular access would be created adjacent to 237 Preston Road. Although this would result in vehicles passing by the dwelling, these would pass at low speeds and the level of noise and disturbance would be negligible in relation to the noise and disturbance already generated by traffic using Preston Road itself. It is also noted that there is an existing car park to the rear of the existing building. The generation of noise from users of the proposed building is likely to be less than that of the children's nursery currently operating from the existing building and is not considered to present an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the occupiers of 237 Preston Road or any other neighbouring property.
25. The proposed building would be located approximately 15m to the south of the dwelling at 241 Preston Road and approximately 6m from the garden. Although this is closer than the existing building, it is noted that the proposed building is of a lower height, with the rear part of the building being single storey only. The windows that would face 241 Preston Road serve a stair well or are in the single storey element, which faces the boundary wall. As a result, it is not considered that there would be any unacceptable impact on privacy. It is noted that there are windows to habitable rooms in the south elevation of 241 Preston Road facing the application site. Given the scale, and split level design of the proposed building, it

is not considered that the impact on outlook or light would be so severe in relation to the existing situation that it would be unacceptably detrimental.

26. Overall, it is considered that any impact on neighbour amenity would be acceptable.

Impact on character and appearance of the locality

27. The proposed development is a health centre facility of a modern design style that would replace a parish hall building of more traditional design style. Although the existing building presents an imposing feature in this prominent location on Preston Road, it is not listed and is not of such special character that its retention can be justified. The proposed building is substantially lower in overall height than the existing hall building, whilst maintaining a visual prominence in the street scene by being taller than the surrounding residential properties, and fills the frontage to an adequate extent. This helps to reinforce the significance of the building for public uses, whilst respecting the scale of the buildings in the area.
28. The exterior of the building at lower ground floor level would be faced with buff coloured, textured split face architectural masonry blockwork. Above this the first floor and front-facing elevations of the ground floor would have a white rendered finish. The southern elevation would have areas of cladding above the windows in a horizontal timber-effect cladding. The building would have curving roof profiles, which would be finished in a zinc-effect, standing-seamed, sheet metal roofing material with aluminium soffits and fascias.
29. Overall, the appearance of the building would be of a contemporary design style that would be typical of a modern and functional health care facility. The scale and massing would be appropriate in the context of development that currently exists on site and can be accommodated without causing harm to the appearance of the site in the street scene. There are a range of property types and styles in the area that have been developed over different periods of time resulting in mix of designs styles across the locality. As such the proposed building would not be out of place when considering the mix of architectural styles prevalent in the surrounding area. In addition, the proposal would result in an increased architectural diversity in the area.
30. The development is, therefore, considered to be in accordance with policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026.

Impact on highways safety

31. The site currently has an established vehicular access to the car park from Preston Road. This would be stopped up and access created to the south side of the site. Parking provision would be made to the rear of the site with capacity for 47 cars, and there would also be cycle storage. The application submission includes a Transport Statement (TS) setting out the transport issues relating to the proposal. The TS has been analysed with regard to the relevant highway policies in terms of the applicant's proposed access strategy, measures to reduce need to travel by car, promotion of sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport; impacts of trips associated with the proposed development on the highway network and the applicant's proposed measures towards managing and mitigating such impacts.

Site access

32. The site has an existing access along its north boundary. The existing access is to be permanently closed and a new 5.5m wide access with 6.0m corner radii provided along the south boundary. A separate new pedestrian access is to be provided central to the site frontage. The access is acceptable, however, there is concern the views of users of the disabled parking bays near the site entrance would be obscured by the proposed building when reversing out of the bays. As the pedestrian access is set behind the bus stop shelter, it should be ensured that wheel/pushchair users can safely transition from the public highway onto the pedestrian path leading to the building. The dropped crossing of the existing access should be reinstated to include new kerb realignments.

Accidents

33. An analysis of traffic accidents within the vicinity of the site is provided at section 2.0.9–2.0.11 of the TS. The applicant's observation that the two slight recorded traffic accidents that occurred outside and to the west of the site access in the past 5 years do not raise highway safety concerns is accepted and no accident mitigation measures are expected from the applicant.

Accessibility by none car modes

Pedestrians and cyclists

34. As required by the Framework developments that generate significant amounts of traffic should promote sustainable modes of travel, safe access and improvements to existing transport networks. Lancashire County and Chorley Councils have objectives to tackle emissions, congestion and poor air quality by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport use. It is acknowledged that accessibility of the site is good due to the site being within walking distance of local services/amenities, the presence of bus stops and cycle routes outside the site and the existing good quality footways in the area, however, crucially, there are currently no facilities outside the site to allow pedestrians to safely cross the road. The carriageway of this section of Preston Road is wide and given the increased pedestrian activity that the proposed development would potentially bring about and the need for patients and vulnerable pedestrians to cross the road, it is considered that for reasons of highway safety and sustainability, a developer funded surface level crossing would be required.

Public transport

35. New developments should essentially be accessible by public transport in order to meet the needs of people without access to private transport and to reduce reliance on car usage. The applicant has reviewed the public transport facilities in the area and identified the nearest bus stop outside the site and across the road to the south of the site. There are 7 bus stop locations within 500m distance of the site. However, of the ten different services that are operated from these stops, only one (service 125) is a public service as the rest are school bus services. The public bus service 125, however operates at 10 to 12 minute frequencies during day and evenings, Mondays to Fridays and half an hour services day and evenings on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
36. For public transport to serve as sustainable alternative to using cars, it must realistically be capable of delivering a shift away from the car by providing services that are more frequent than once an hour during the day, Monday to Saturday, with an evening and Sunday services. It appears the service currently provided by public bus service 125 is in line with this requirement. It is, therefore, considered that accessibility by public transport has been demonstrated. However, as the bus stops are vital component of the public transport system, it is necessary they are fully accessible, feel safe and secure to use and provide good quality information on services for improved patronage and sustainability. As the two nearest bus stops to the site are currently not compliant with the Equality Act 2010, in accordance with the Framework, which requires developers to maximise efforts in creating a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of travel, it is considered appropriate to require the applicant to upgrade these bus stops to assist those with mobility issues.

Proposed internal layout and parking

37. There are no major highway concerns with regard to the proposed layout. The applicant proposes 43 ordinary car parking spaces and 4 spaces for disabled people, a total of 47 spaces based on Lancashire County Council parking standard. The parking provision should however be based on the Local Authority (Chorley Council) parking standard. Therefore, using the Chorley Council parking standard, it has been calculated that the proposed development would require a total of 68 ordinary parking spaces and 4 spaces for disabled people. The applicant's proposed level of parking is, therefore, below the standard requirement.
38. Therefore, to reduce and avert the risks of any unsatisfactory highway conditions due to the proposed development, the applicant was advised to conduct a parking accumulation survey to demonstrate that the size of the car park and the proposed number of parking spaces can cater for the needs of the site in robust parking scenarios. The applicant carried out a

parking accumulation exercise, which indicates that there would be peak staff/patient parking demand of 40 spaces between 9am and 11am on a Tuesday, should the practice expand to the maximum of 15,000 patients. Outside these times, the exercise demonstrates that demand would be significantly lower. This is also based on a similar appointment profile to that at the existing practice at Whittle Surgery. Notwithstanding this, even adopting the worst case demand of 40 spaces, this is below the 47 spaces to be provided and consequently there should be little or no potential for over-spill parking as a result of the proposal.

39. In response to the applicant's parking accumulation exercise, LCC Highways carried out their own TRICS based exercise. This indicated a minimum demand of 50 car parking spaces would be required at peak times. This exceeds the 47 spaces that are proposed on site. Clearly there is some variation in the two modelling exercises, however, even in the worst case scenario of a demand for 50 spaces a difference of only 3 parking spaces could not be considered to result in queueing or displacement of vehicles that would result in a severe cumulative impact on highway safety.

Traffic impact assessment - Trip generation

40. The weekly appointments for the existing surgery at 199 Preston Road is approximately 800. Following relocation, it is proposed that with time, this would be increased to 1200. The new surgery would operate the existing times of 08:00-18:30 hours - 5 days a week, i.e. 52.5 hours a week. However, this would be extended to 08:00- 20:00 hours - 7 days a week i.e. 84 hours a week representing 60% increase in weekly appointment hours if patients and staff numbers grow as envisaged from 10,000 to 15,000 in ten years.
41. The applicant explained that notwithstanding the proposed increase in patients and staff numbers, given the 60% increase in weekly appointment hours which includes weekends, there would be little change to the hourly trip generation of the new development, especially during the AM and PM peaks as the increased staff would cover existing shifts each week, and where there are shift overlaps with more staff and patients on site, these would be outside traffic peak periods.
42. The applicant carried out a survey of travel patterns of patients of the existing site and their proposed mode of travel to the new facility. The result of the survey is shown on Table 2, paragraph 3.0.15 of the TS. The survey shows 72.1% of patients currently travel by car to the existing surgery with 50.9% saying they intend to travel to the new surgery by car. The applicant then applied these percentages to the existing and proposed number of appointments to derive the weekly trip distribution. The trip generation of the existing Nursery was not discounted and no separate estimates of trips for the pharmacy and the community café were made as these were considered ancillary to the surgery.
43. The methodology used in assessing the trip generation and distribution, including the figures obtained and the assumptions made are considered reasonable and as such accepted.

Transport impact mitigation

44. The proposed development requires adequate and necessary checks to be made by LCC Highways to ensure the non-car transport infrastructure can accommodate people's everyday movement needs. As indicated above, good quality footways of widths more than standard exist in the area and bus stops are within close proximity of the development, however, the existing bus stops do not meet current standard in layout terms to facilitate access for users, particularly those with mobility impairments. Site investigations have established that this section of Preston Road cannot be safely crossed without the introduction of additional measures to assist pedestrians. It is, therefore, considered that the developer should mitigate the adverse effects of the proposed development by carrying out the following improvements:
- Improve the bus stops outside the site and that opposite 229-231 Preston Road to the south of the site. The bus stop improvements should include raised boarding area to assist those with mobility issues, bay markings to delineate limits of the bus stops and clearway markings. The existing bus shelters should also be replaced with new.

- Provide a pedestrian refuge incorporating tactile pavings at a location to be agreed, preferably outside 231 Preston Road to assist safe crossing of the road.
45. The preliminary design of the pedestrian refuge and the bus stop markings should be subject to Stage 1 Road Safety Audit to identify potential road safety issues or problems that may affect road users and to recommend measures to eliminate or mitigate these problems. As the bus stop improvements, provision of the pedestrian refuge and works associated with the site access constitute highway works, these would be undertaken through the s278 agreement of the Highways Act 1980 with the full cost of the works borne by the applicant. As part of s278 agreement, the applicant would be required to provide a commuted sum for the maintenance of the bus shelters for an agreed period of time.
46. The above measures are considered directly related to the proposed development and are necessary to make the proposal acceptable in highway terms and seem fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. The schemes are to be funded by the applicant and delivered through the Section 278 agreement of the Highways Act 1980. During the S278 process, the final location of the pedestrian refuge would be agreed on site.

Construction

47. Significant vehicle movements would take place during construction, therefore, to ensure that the movements can be facilitated safely, the applicant would be required to submit a Construction Management Plan (CMP) to include Construction Method Statement (CMS). It is also recommended that the site access is in place prior to construction taking place with the off-site highway works being in place prior to the development being occupied.
48. In conclusion the impact on highway safety as a result of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable on the basis that the necessary mitigation measures identified above are implemented. The applicant has confirmed that they have no objection to the imposition of conditions appropriate to secure the necessary highway mitigation measures. The conditions will be set out on the addendum prior to committee.

Ecology

49. An Ecology Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The report identifies the presence of invasive plant species and several ponds that the Assessment considers to be connected to the site, and which have been assessed as having average and good potential to support great crested newts (GCN). Further clarification was sought from the applicant with regards to the possible presence of a newt corridor / territory across the application site. The applicant's ecologist confirms that the GCN habitat identified on site is approximately 180 metres from the nearest pond. This is towards the upper limit of which most GCN will travel (250 metres), and given the abundance of GCN habitat available in closer proximity to the ponds, it is considered unlikely that it would be an important part of the territory of any newts. It is also not well connected to land further south, and as such does not form part of any habitat corridor.
50. The existing boundary treatments between GCN habitat to the west of the site and further north would be retained, ensuring that the existing habitat connectivity is retained. As specified in the Ecological Assessment, a Great Crested Newt Method Statement needs to be implemented prior to the commencement of the works on site, which would serve to ensure that this connectivity is maintained. It is recommended that this is secured through a suitably worded planning condition.
51. The Council's ecology advisors accept the findings of the survey and recommend that conditions are attached in relation to the removal of trees and vegetation, invasive non-native species protocol, and biodiversity enhancement measures.

Other matters

52. Issues with surface water run-off: The level of hard surfacing on site would be similar to that which exists on site currently and therefore surface water run off would be similar. To

achieve some level of improvement it is recommended that a condition is attached requiring that any hard surfaced areas are permeable or drain to a soakaway.

53. What boundary treatment would be included?: It is recommended that details are sought by condition.
54. Would lighting be included to the car park?: It is recommended that details are sought by condition.
55. What maintenance would take place: This is a matter for the applicant to determine.
56. A community café would not be a success and may be redeveloped for something else: If this is the case then a further change of use application may be required.
57. What are the plans for the electricity substation?; This does not form part of the application.
58. Security provisions need to be considered: It is recommended that details are sought by condition.
59. What is the timescale to completion?: This is a matter for the applicant to determine.
60. Access to the car park should be prevented out of hours: It is recommended that details are sought by condition.

CONCLUSION

61. The proposed development would result in the significant benefit of providing a modern health care facility in an area of the borough that has received substantial housing development. The proposal would have no unacceptable detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and would result in no net harm to appearance of the site and character of the area. In addition, there would be no unacceptable impact on highway safety or ecology subject to the imposition and subsequent compliance with conditions. On the basis of the above, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

Ref: 00/00895/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 3 January 2001
Description: Removal of hedge and construction of boundary wall.

Ref: 05/00366/INV **Decision:** APPVAL **Decision Date:**
Description: Formation of new doorway in existing side window and formation of disabled access ramp,

Ref: 05/00895/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 27 October 2005
Description: Formation of new doorway in existing side window and formation of disabled access ramp,

Ref: 07/01072/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 21 November 2007
Description: Removal of existing timber fire escape and erection of new galvanised steel fire escape at rear,

Ref: 10/00905/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 2 December 2010
Description: Provision of outdoor play equipment including the erection of new fencing and surfacing materials

Ref: 90/01119/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 12 March 1991
Description: Erection of new parish hall and three blocks of offices

Ref: 90/00639/OUT **Decision:** PEROPP **Decision Date:** 6 November 1990

Description: Outline application for replacement community centre and erection of retirement housing

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.

Suggested Conditions

To follow