

APPLICATION REPORT – 18/00113/COU

Validation Date: 6 February 2018

Ward: Chorley North West

Type of Application: Change of Use Planning

Proposal: Change of use from offices (Use Class A2) to a GP surgery (Use Class D1).

Location: Ann James House 32 - 34 St Thomas's Road Chorley PR7 1HR

Case Officer: Mr Iain Crossland

Applicant: Dr Gora Bangi

Consultation expiry: 5 March 2018

Decision due by: 3 April 2018

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions and a S106 Obligation.

SITE DESCRIPTION

2. The application site is a vacant office building located on St. Thomas Street, to the east of Chorley Town Centre. The property is located on a main highway and is a building of traditional character resembling a pair of Victorian villas that were merged at one time and have parking provision to the sides and rear. It is likely that the building was originally two separate semi-detached properties that were previously used as dwellinghouses, residential flats but more recently as an office.
3. The area is characterised by large Victorian and Edwardian villas that are in a variety of commercial and office uses, with residential properties along the streets radiating from the main road. It is noted that similar buildings in the locality have been recently converted to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and that properties such as this are increasingly being converted to HMOs in this area.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4. The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the premises from offices (Use Class A2) to a GP surgery (Use Class D1). No external physical alterations are proposed as part of the conversion works.
5. The GP Surgery currently occupies 4 consulting rooms within Chorley Health Centre located on Collison Street. The proposed move to Ann James House would facilitate the provision of a reception area, waiting room, back office, six GP consulting rooms, two nurse rooms, a staff room, treatment room, conference/library room, staff gym and other associated rooms.
6. It is noted that a recent application by the same applicant (17/00841/COU) to change the use of the premises from an office to GP surgery was refused in January 2018. This was

refused on highway grounds due to the lack of on-site parking, combined with a lack of on street parking provision due to local parking restrictions and with no mitigation proposed.

REPRESENTATIONS

7. Representations have been received from 5 addresses citing the following grounds of objection:
 - Increase in traffic and insufficient parking provision.
 - Impact on amenity of local residents through increased traffic and inconsiderate parking.
 - The NHS should not be funding this needless relocation of the GP surgery.
 - There are already 4 GP surgeries in the area all of which are near pay and display car parks, yet they are not use.
8. Cllr Beaver has requested that the application be put before the members of the Development Control Committee in order that the issue of a lack of available car parking spaces in a mainly residents parking only area may be considered.

CONSULTATIONS

9. Lancashire Highway Services – Have no objection subject to the applicant entering into a S106 agreement to cover the costs of investigation and future changes to the existing waiting restrictions on the surrounding streets, to cover staff costs, the advertising and implementation of traffic regulation orders for the changes and introduction to the waiting restrictions

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

10. 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.
11. 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."*
12. Strategic Objective SO19 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012), amongst other things, seeks to improve access to healthcare. In addition, policy 23 of the Core Strategy seeks to integrate public health principles and planning, and help to reduce health inequalities by, amongst other things, working with health care commissioners to support health care infrastructure.
13. The application site falls within the settlement boundary of Chorley within the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 for which policy V2 is relevant. Policy V2 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, subject to material planning considerations and the other Policies and Proposals within this Plan". The supporting text for policy V2 explains that development proposals will be judged by their compatibility with existing surrounding development and their ability to satisfy material planning criteria. This includes factors such as access, parking, servicing, design and amenity, which includes an assessment of noise, emissions, disturbance because of anti-social hours of operation and traffic generation.
14. Policy HW6 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 seeks to protect and support the provision of community uses such doctors surgeries.

15. The site is located on the edge of the Town Centre and the proposed use would make use of a currently vacant building in a prominent location. The facility would be relocated from one unit to another and so there would be no loss of a health care facility. The site is accessible and located in a sustainable location. The proposal is, therefore, considered acceptable in principle.

Provision of parking spaces and highway safety

16. Chorley Local Plan policy ST4 and Appendix A require that for uses falling within Use Class D1, developments should have 1 space per 2 staff plus 4 per consulting room. The proposed plans show 6 GP consulting rooms and 3 nurse consulting rooms. In addition to this, there are proposed offices, a counselling room, 3 visiting service rooms and a treatment room. This translates in the requirement set out below:

Class D1 use within Chorley Town Centre	10 fte staff	= 5
4 spaces per consulting room	6 GP rooms	= 24
4 spaces per consulting room	3 nursing rooms	= 12
Total		= 41 spaces

(this does not include the ancillary accommodation including visitor rooms, treatment room, counselling room, offices, storage and waiting area.)

17. The applicant is proposing to provide off-road car parking for 14 cars, 20 secure bicycles and at the front of the building motorcycle and mobility scooter parking. There is also a drop off point within the site. This is below the maximum requirement set out in the Local Plan, however, it should be noted that the existing offices also fall short of the current requirement for 27 spaces for this use.
18. LCC requested a Transport Statement to show the expected number of trips and on-street parking expectation and any related issues, such as indiscriminate and obstructive parking. This states that an assessment of the traffic generation and parking accumulation for the proposed GP surgery has been carried out using the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS), as requested by LCC. The TRICS data and the associated parking accumulation is shown in Appendix 4. The assessment shows that the maximum parking accumulation will occur between 9.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m. with parking required for 22 cars. This includes staff and patient parking. The proposed GP surgery would have 14 parking spaces, as shown on the proposed car park layout and, therefore, there could be a shortfall in the amount of parking that is available at the proposed GP surgery at these times.
19. It is noted that the application site is located in a densely populated urban area of the town close to the town centre. As such, there is often pressure upon on street parking levels. Conversely, the fact that the GP surgery would be located in such a densely populated area means that it is accessible on foot to a large number of people, living in the area or working in the town centre.
20. Policy ST4 of the Local Plan does allow for some deviation above or below the standards having regard to local circumstances such as the quality of provision for pedestrians and cyclists and the distance to and quality of bus stops. The application site is located in a highly sustainable area, with excellent pedestrian and cycle links to a large number of residents and close proximity to public transport services.
21. It is recognised that the GP surgery currently operates from Collison Street, some 120m away and it is understood that the surgery currently shares spaces with a larger medical centre and so they are only allocated 2 GP parking spaces and share 22 visitor spaces with the medical centre. It is also understood that many of the applicant's patients walk to the surgery and following a survey the surgery has received positive feedback from their patients.
22. It must also be considered that residents of more densely developed areas of the borough should not be deprived of health care services due to the difficulties of providing on-site parking facilities in such areas, and that the welfare of local residents should not be prejudiced as a result.

23. LCC Highways is of the opinion that the proposed change of use from offices (Use Class A2) to a GP surgery (Use Class D1) would have a detrimental impact on highway safety and capacity in the immediate vicinity of the site, unless the applicant is to address the issues regarding the short fall in on-site and on-street parking.
24. While the applicant is proposing to provide off-road car parking for 14 cars, 20 secure bicycles and, at the front of the building, motorcycle and mobility scooter parking, which is below the standard, LCC Highways are of the opinion that revisions to the existing on street parking arrangements are required, to allow for more short stay parking provision in the vicinity of the development, in order to make the development acceptable.
25. LCC Highways, therefore, recommends that a S106 contribution of £7,500 is secured to cover the costs of investigation and future changes to the existing waiting restrictions on the surrounding streets, to cover staff costs, the advertising and implementation of traffic regulation orders for the changes and introduction to the waiting restrictions.
26. The applicant has confirmed that they accept the necessary requirement for these mitigation measures and has agreed to sign a S106 agreement to cover the mitigation.
27. LCC as the Highway Authority are satisfied that the proposed development would not be harmful to the efficient functioning of the highway network subject to a S106 agreement and conditions. Having regard to the fact that the Council's parking standards are expressed in maximum terms and that the application site is located in a highly accessible residential location, within a large catchment with good access for pedestrians and cyclists, and excellent access to public transport facilities, it is considered that the proposed development would comply with policy ST4 of the Chorley Local Plan. In considering this and the demand already generated by the existing use, it is considered that the proposed change of use would not have any unacceptable impact on highway safety or local parking arrangements.
28. In relation to the previous application (17/00841/COU) it is noted that this was refused for the following reasons, and in consideration of an objection from LCC as Highway Authority:
 1. The proposed development conflicts with policy ST4 of the Chorley Local Plan due to insufficient on-site parking and it is considered that the harm caused by the proposed development through the resultant increase in on-street parking would outweigh the benefits of the proposal.
 2. It is considered that the proposed development would result in additional vehicles visiting the premises and an increase in demand for on-street parking. The associated comings and goings of increased vehicles to the surgery seeking on-street parking would result in additional noise, disturbance and increased levels of general activity on nearby roads. The proposed development is, therefore, contrary to one of the twelve core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework that requires a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings and policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan.
29. This application would only be approved on completion of a S106 legal agreement to cover the costs of investigation and future changes to the existing waiting restrictions on the surrounding streets, to cover staff costs, the advertising and implementation of traffic regulation orders for the changes and introduction to the waiting restrictions. LCC Highways do not, therefore, object on the basis of these works as they would alter the highway conditions in the area so that the proposed GP surgery could be accommodated with the level of parking proposed. This would reduce the impact on amenity for local residents as patients looking to park in the area would be more effectively controlled and accommodated.
30. In consideration of the commitment to cover the costs of reviewing parking restrictions in the area it is considered that, on balance, the benefits of providing improved healthcare facilities for local residents outweighs the harm through the likely increase in on-street parking.

Other matters

31. The NHS should not be funding this needless relocation of the GP surgery: This is not a material planning consideration.

32. There are already 4 GP surgeries in the area all of which are near pay and display car parks, yet they are not used: This suggests that adequate public parking provision exists for other nearby surgeries.

CONCLUSION

21. The proposed development would be located in a highly sustainable location and is not considered to result in any unacceptable harm to highway safety subject to alterations to local highway parking arrangements. On the basis of the above, it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to a S106 agreement.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

Ref: 5/1/01134 **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 4 November 1958
Description: Conversion of outbuildings to self contained flat with garages on ground floor.

Ref: 5/1/02554 **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 9 December 1965
Description: Use of former chest clinic as offices

Ref: 5/1/02661 **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 7 June 1966
Description: change of use from offices to flats

Ref: 5/1/02734 **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 29 November 1966
Description: Change of use from dwellinghouse to office accommodation with car parking facilities

Ref: 79/00675/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 20 August 1979
Description: Change of use to offices

Ref: 80/00472/ADV **Decision:** PERADV **Decision Date:** 9 June 1980
Description: Illuminated sign

Ref: 84/00519/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 6 November 1984
Description: Conversion of two storey outbuilding (garage/storage) to office accommodation

Ref: 11/00858/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 29 November 2011
Description: Construction of a disabled access ramp, provision of 2 No. parking spaces and the installation of a cycle store

Ref: 11/01095/ADV **Decision:** PERADV **Decision Date:** 10 February 2012
Description: Installation of external signage to housing office comprising of 1 No. projecting sign to front elevation, 2 No. fascia signs, one to each side elevation and 1 No. sign adjacent to the front entrance.

Ref: 17/00841/COU **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 25 January 2018
Description: Change of use from offices (Use Class A2) to a GP surgery (Use Class D1).

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

No.	Condition									
1.	<p>The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p><i>Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</i></p>									
2.	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Title</th> <th>Drawing Reference</th> <th>Received date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Site location plan</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>06 February 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposed floor plans</td> <td>5918_SK02 Rev.S2</td> <td>06 February 2018</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.</i></p>	Title	Drawing Reference	Received date	Site location plan	N/A	06 February 2018	Proposed floor plans	5918_SK02 Rev.S2	06 February 2018
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Proposed floor plans	5918_SK02 Rev.S2	06 February 2018								
3.	<p>Prior to the first occupation of the premises hereby approved details of secured cycle storage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall accord with the current Chorley Council Parking standard and include a secure covered facility. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the first occupation/use of the development. The facilities shall be retained at all times thereafter.</p> <p><i>Reason: To encourage sustainable transport modes.</i></p>									
4.	<p>The car parking and manoeuvring areas shall be marked out in accordance with the approved plan as set out in Appendix 3 of the Parking & Transport Statement received 06 February 2018 and shall be made available prior to premises hereby permitted becoming operative. The parking spaces shall be permanently retained thereafter and no spaces shall be reserved for individuals.</p> <p><i>Reasons: To allow for the effective use of the parking areas.</i></p>									