COMMITTEE EXTRACT

Committee Date: 3 June 2008

Reference:- **08/00383/FUL** **Parish:-**

Applicant:- **Assura Property Limited**
Regus House
Chester Business Park
Chester
CH4 9QR

Location:- **Castle Mead Medical Centre 33 Hill Street Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 1DS**

Proposal:- **EXTENSION AND ALTERATIONS TO CREATE PHARMACY AND CONSULTING ROOMS**

Introduction:-

This application seeks full planning permission for an extension to the existing health centre to create three additional consulting rooms and an extension to create a pharmacy. The additional consulting rooms are required as replacements for those lost through the creation for the proposed pharmacy.

The existing building is of single storey design with a prominent roof mass and a detail brick banding to the elevations. The front elevation of the building is dominated by the series of projecting gables that extend forward to Hill Street.

The health centre forms part of the larger Hinckley & District Hospital site, providing a mix of heath care provision, including outpatient's services, pharmacy and small non-emergency hospital facility. Car parking is provided within the site but is limited, however the site does lie within the town centre close to public car parks, on street parking provision and public transport connections. The proposal will result in a loss of 2 of the existing car parking spaces and no additional car parking is proposed as part of this application, however the existing disabled parking spaces are maintained.

The application is accompanied by a design and access statement and supporting information confirming that the pharmacy is likely to require 9 fulltime staff and will be open between 0700-2200 hrs Monday - Saturday and 1000-2000 hrs on Sunday.

History:-

01/00695/FUL	Extensions to Medical Centre	Approved	07/09/01

Consultations:-

No objection has been received from:-

The Primary Care Trust
Head of Community Services (Pollution)
Head of Community Services (Land Drainage)
Central Networks.

Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste Management (Highways) advises that the proposal will result in the loss of 2No off street parking spaces at the north of the site. These will be built upon to accommodate the 3 proposed consulting rooms, obliterated by the pharmacy extension. Therefore the proposal will not give rise to any additional trips (either motorised or other) by further doctors, staff or patients being attracted to the medical centre side of things.

The matters before me therefore are the impact the proposed pharmacy will have on traffic movements and parking demand.

The pharmacy will employ 9 additional staff and there will be an overall loss of 2no existing spaces from the site. There are no specific parking standards for a pharmacy use within L.C.C.'s design guide and the nearest thing would be for a retail shop, which would require 2 spaces. The overall parking provision retained for both the existing and proposed uses are as follows:-

7 consulting rooms @ 2 spaces per room = 14 spaces
1 space per member of existing staff = 14 spaces
Total = 28 spaces

The proposed number of spaces is 33. This therefore leaves 5 spaces theoretically to cater for the pharmacy. Which is not inappropriate. The vast majority of trips to the surgery will be linked with the same visitors then using the dispensing facilities. In overall terms this could in fact significantly reduce onward vehicle movements to other dispensing facilities, as patients will in effect have the benefit of a 'one stop' facility. This will help (albeit marginally) reduce overall traffic congestion and environmental impact in the town. In addition this is a town centre location with good transport choice and cycle / footway links which means that a reasonable percentage of visitors may arrive by means other than by private vehicles.

If parking were to spill over onto the Highway then this would be undesirable; however the surrounding roads are all subject to comprehensive on street parking controls which manage parking along with the now very visual and ever present parking enforcement staff.

When considering all the aforementioned points, the proposal would not have any detrimental affect on highway safety in the vicinity or materially increase traffic movements on local roads.

It is recommend that the centre prepare a green staff travel plan to reduce staff visiting the site by private vehicle.

Two letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:-

a) An additional pharmacy is not required within such close proximity of an existing pharmacy (Health Centre pharmacy).
b) The development will increase further the demand for car parking space in the immediate area, where residents already experience parking difficulties in Hill Street.
c) Castle Mead and Maples Surgeries have undergone extensions in the past and no additional parking was found.

A petition containing 306 signatures has been received from members of the public stating that the idea of two pharmacies within 30 yards of each other is incredulous and the proposal will result in further loss of car parking on site.

Development Plan Policies:-

Central Government Guidance

Manual for Streets provides the most up to date guidance of highways matters and parking in particular. The guidance states 'the availability of car parking is a major determinant of travel mode' and therefore caution should be expressed in continually providing off street car parking commensurate with the use proposed.

Structure Plan Polices

There are no saved Structure Plan polices relevant to this decision.

Local Plan Policies

The site lies within the settlement boundary for Hinckley and within the fringe of the Town Centre as defined in the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan.

Policy BE1 considers the design and siting of the development, in terms of the effect on the character of the area, amenities of neighbours and highway safety.

Policy T4 allows for the loss of off street car parking where it can be demonstrated that alternative parking provision is proposed and where alternative transport options are available.

Appraisal:-

The main considerations with regards to this application are the principle of the extensions, the design of the extensions and the parking provision and highway safety issues associated with the proposal.

The Principle
The site lies within the defined town centre area and within the settlement boundary for Hinckley; there is therefore a presumption in favour of development. Prior to the Government direction on which polices of the local plan can be saved beyond the 3 year period, the site was recognised as one providing health care provision and policy CF3 applied. This policy was not saved as it duplicated Policy BE1 of the local plan. Whilst the plan designation and Policy CF3 have been lost the principle for the development of the site for health care is still considered acceptable providing the requirements of Policy BE1 are met.

The Design
The extensions proposed are of single storey design and are compatible with the design and scale of the existing building and create a distinctive and legible frontage. The access to the pharmacy dominates the frontage and provides disabled access directly from the car park.

Parking Provision and Highway Safety
The additional consulting rooms cause no detriment to the parking requirements of the site as they replace rooms lost through the creation of the pharmacy.

The concerns shared by neighbours and fellow pharmacists that the proposal is not needed, is not for the planning system to consider. Market demand will control the need for an additional pharmacy.

The Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste Management (Highways) has provided extensive comments on the proposal and has carefully considered the parking requirements of the proposal and has concluded that that the proposal if permitted would not have any detrimental affect on highway safety in the vicinity or materially increase traffic movements on local roads. This opinion is however contrary to that shared by the signatories of the petition who believe that the proposal will result in a loss of car parking at the site which will be to the detriment of highway safety in Hill Street.

Highways have acknowledged that a pharmacy provided on site with other health care services is not likely to result in significant additional journeys and parking requirements due to the association of the uses, i.e. following a doctors consultation the patient can immediately obtain any prescription or medication without needing to travel further. The use there provides a healthcare one-stop-shop.

The number of signatories to the petition is significant and therefore suggests that there is wider public interest in the development and issue of parking at the site, however the petition has been supplied by a existing town centre pharmacist and people have signed to say that "it is incredulous to have two pharmacies in Hill Street". Of the 306 signatures, none of them are from Hill Street and only two are from Mount Road. Additionally, all of the properties opposite the application site have been consulted and no responses have been received to date. Accordingly, this may suggest that the perception of the parking problems in the locality is much worse than is likely to be accepted.

The balance between these differing opinions must be carefully evaluated and consideration must be given to the fact that the site lies within the town centre and there is easy access to public transport and alternative car parks are available. Additionally, consideration should be given to the fact that the proposed pharmacy is related to healthcare provision and therefore complements the other health care uses on this site.

On balance therefore, and given the relationship of the proposal to the provision of healthcare and to sites town centre location, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION :- Permit subject to the following conditions :-

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation and Relevant Development Plan Policies :

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

2 The materials to be used on the external elevations of the proposed extension and alteration shall match the corresponding materials of the existing building unless previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

3 No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a comprehensive green travel plan, including the provision of secure on-site cycle parking, has been submitted to, and approved in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the plan shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.

4 Before development commences the parking spaces as shown on the approved plan shall be provided and made available for such use at all times thereafter.

5 The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a financial contribution for the loss of the two on-site car parking spaces resulting from the proposal, as required in accordance with policy IMP1 of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan, has been secured in such a manner as is approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reasons :-

1 To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 To ensure that the development has a satisfactory external appearance to accord with policy BE1 of the adopted Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan.

3 To reduce the dependency on car travel to and from the site, in the interests of sustainability and highway safety.

4 To ensure adequate car parking provision is provided within the site, both during construction and after the development is completed, in the interests of highway safety.

5 To ensure the development contributes towards the provision and maintenance of existing town centre parking facilities within the vicinity of the site to accord with policy IMP1 of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth local plan.

Notes to Applicant:-

1 Bats, nesting birds, great crested newts and certain other species are protected by law. If any such species are discovered before or during the works the works must be suspended and the local office of Natural England contacted for advice.

2 This permission does not grant approval under the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2000 (as amended) for which a separate application may be required. You are advised to contact the Building Control Section.

3. As from 6th April 2008 this Authority are charging for the discharge of conditions in accordance with revised fee regulations which came into force on that date. Application forms to discharge conditions and further information can be found on the planning portal web site www.planningportal.gov.uk.

4 The applicant is advised that in relation to condition 5, a financial contribution of £4000 is required towards the provision and maintenance of existing town centre parking facilities within the vicinity of the site to accord with policy IMP1 of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth local plan.

Contact Officer:- James Hicks Ext 5762