

**NHI/3368/2 – Dr M Hardman**

**Proposed conversion and extension of an existing dwelling (C3 use) for use as a dental surgery (D1 use) with associated specialist operating suites and lecture room.**

**95 West Way, Botley, Oxford, OX2 9JY.**

**1.0 The Proposal**

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission to extend and convert the existing dwelling for use as a dental surgery. The building is proposed to be extended to the side and rear. In connection with the surgery the applicant proposes 2 specialist operating suites and a lecture room housed in a linked building to the rear.
- 1.2 The applicant has an existing dental practice in St Clements, Oxford. In addition to her general dentistry practice, she is a leading exponent in the specialist fields of implantology and the treatment of phobic patients, and lectures other dentists on these topic areas. The applicant has stated in their supporting information that the current premises are too small to undertake both of these activities, and 95 West Way has been identified as an alternative site that could provide facilities on the same site. The applicant also hopes to secure PCT funding to increase the amount of treatment available for NHS patients.
- 1.3 The existing dwelling is a 2 storey Edwardian style detached dwelling. It is located on the south west side of West Way, close to the point where the road separates to become Eynsham Road and Cumnor Hill. The site is located approximately 200m from Elms Parade Shopping centre car park and lies within 25m of bus stops with services into and out of Oxford every 10 – 15mins during peak hours and 30 – 45mins at off peak times.
- 1.4 The site is bounded by dwellings to the north east, south west and south. It is screened at the front by a 2m high hedge, behind which lies a hard surfaced parking area. To the rear of the property is a flat roofed extension with a roof terrace, an outdoor swimming pool and a long single storey garage / storage building which runs along the eastern boundary of the site with 93 West Way.
- 1.5 Copies of the plans showing the location of the proposal, its design and layout together with extracts from the design and access statement are attached at **Appendix 1**. The applicant has also provided 3D modelling perspectives showing how the proposed extensions will relate to neighbouring properties. These are attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.6 The application comes to Committee because a number of objection letters have been received and North Hinksey Parish Council has objected to the application.

**2.0 Planning History**

- 2.1 Outline planning permission was granted in 1988 for the erection of 2 dwellings on the site.

**3.0 Planning Policies**

- 3.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011*

Policy GS5 (making efficient use of land and buildings) seeks to promote the efficient re-use of previously developed / unused land and buildings within settlements (provided there is no conflict with other policies in the Local Plan).

- 3.2 Policy GS10 (minimising the need to travel by car and reducing the impact of traffic) states that new development will only be permitted in locations where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised. Development which would generate significant levels of traffic will not be permitted where travel by modes other than the private car are not available or cannot be provided for effectively.
- 3.3 Policy CF2 (new community services and facilities) enables new development in connection with the provision of new services and facilities for the social well being of local communities, providing the proposal conforms to the general policies for development in the plan, and maximises as far as possible access for all; is within a built-up area; and any extension will not have an adverse effect on the character or setting of the existing building or its surroundings, or significantly alter the character and scale of the existing activity so as to cause harm to the local environment.
- 3.4 Policies DC1, DC5, and DC9 (quality of new development) are also relevant and seek to ensure that all new development is of a high standard of design; does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours; and the development is acceptable in terms of highway safety.

#### 4.0 **Consultations**

- 4.1 North Hinksey Parish Council objects to the proposal and their comments are attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 4.2 County Engineer – “there are no objections in principle subject to conditions. In saying this it is noted that the nearby car parking for West Way Shopping Precinct, with capacity, is available within easy walking distance”.
- 4.3 Drainage Engineer – “providing no increase in existing discharge rates, no objection”.
- 4.4 Thames Water – no objections.
- 4.5 Environmental Health – no objections.
- 4.6 Oxfordshire PCT – “Dr Maria Hardman currently holds an NHS dental contract in her current premises and would anticipate continuing to offer NHS dental services from the new dental surgery in Botley. There is currently only one dental practice in Botley offering NHS dental services and this is on the first floor and therefore not accessible to older and disabled patients. The PCT is keen to be able to offer choice to patients and would find it helpful to be able to offer NHS dental services with disabled access. Dr Hardman is also keen to work with the PCT to develop other NHS dental services in the future within what is planned to be a more flexible facility than her current premises.”
- 4.7 3 letters of objection have been received from local residents, which are summarised as follows:
- This part of Botley has always been considered a residential area. The applicant should be encouraged to open up in the shopping precinct.

- The development will result in heavy footfall and significant traffic problems in the immediate area. On site parking is inadequate. Neighbour's driveways will get blocked and parking along the service road will hinder and inconvenience existing residents. It will also increase the danger to pedestrians and cyclists.
- The proposed extension is out of character with the area.
- The proposed extension to the rear is too large, too high and will adversely affect the amenity / privacy of neighbours. It will also be over-dominant, and will cause a loss of sunlight to surrounding neighbours.

4.8 A letter of objection from Botley Dental Practice has been received stating that there is no clinical need for this proposal as their surgery has capacity to accept further NHS patients. They also comment that the new surgery will inevitably result in car congestion from staff and patients and that the applicant has not applied for PCT funding.

## 5.0 **Officer Comments**

5.1 The main issues in this case are considered to be 1) the principle of a dental surgery in this locality, 2) the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, 3) the impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties and 4) the safety of the access and parking arrangements.

5.2 On the first issue, Local Plan Policy CF2 sets out the Council's general support for proposals to provide community services and facilities, subject to a number of criteria. When assessing the application against these, it is clear that the site is within a built up area housing a variety of residential, commercial and institutional uses and that proposal has been designed to be accessible for all. Policy GS10 indicates that new development can be permitted in locations where the need to travel, particularly by car is minimised. The area is well served by public transport, and in this context 95 West Way is clearly a sustainable and accessible location. A dental surgery use is also considered to be one that can be carried on without detriment to neighbouring dwellings. As such, the principle of a dental surgery is therefore considered acceptable in this location.

5.3 Regarding the second issue, the proposed extensions to the existing building are not considered to be out of keeping with the locality. The side extension has been designed to appear subordinate to the main building, using similar materials and as such Officers consider no harm is caused to the street scene or wider locality. The flat roofed extension to the immediate rear is also considered acceptable, being of a contemporary design that compliments the existing building.

5.4 The inclusion of the linked building to the rear does not undermine the established character of the area, which essentially comprises a variety of building styles and sizes. Whilst it is accepted that the building is larger than most residential extensions in terms of bulk and massing, it has a wide span and low eaves level that leads to a more acceptable scaling of the building when viewed from the street. The building is also set centrally on the site behind the existing building where its prominence in the street scene is muted. It is set off from both common boundaries with the neighbouring dwellings, with space around remaining and therefore is not considered to be an overdevelopment of the site. Furthermore there are other such buildings in

the locality – no104 West Way for example is a similarly designed building of a comparable size that houses flats. As such, Officers consider the proposal to be visually acceptable.

- 5.5 Turning to the third issue, the impact upon neighbouring properties, it is considered that no undue harm would be caused to those properties immediately adjoining the site. The garage of 97 West Way adjoins the western boundary of the site at the southern point where the 2 storey extension is proposed (where the extension will be forward of the garage). To the rear of this garage is an area of lawn overlooked by windows to a bedroom and dining room in the side elevation of 97 West Way, which is parallel to the location of the swimming pool. Whilst some loss of light to these windows may occur, your Officers consider that any impact of overshadowing / loss of light arising from this proposal would not be sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal, given that the linked building lies 10.5m to the east, and has a low eaves with a roof sloping away from this property.
- 5.6 With respect to 93 West Way, the existing dormer window on the side elevation looks out onto the flank elevation of the existing dwelling. The new linked building, sited to the rear, does not overshadow no93 West Way to the extent that harm is caused sufficient to warrant refusal. Adequate lighting from the southwest will be maintained, as the linked building will be 8m away, and the roof again slopes away from this property. Furthermore, the proposal removes the existing long garage building that is positioned right on the boundary which should improve light to the garden of no 93 West Way.
- 5.7 The proposal also removes an existing roof terrace where views of neighbouring gardens can easily be obtained at present. Given the proposed provision of high level roof lights for the lecture room, it is considered that privacy for the adjoining properties will not be adversely affected, and in some respects could be said to be enhanced. The property to the south east (19 Conifer Close) has no windows facing the site and is 21m from the rear elevation of the proposed building.
- 5.8 In terms of noise and disturbance, the proposed use is considered to be compatible with adjoining dwellings. The surgery is to operate between the hours of 0800 – 1700 Monday to Friday with activity confined to within the building. There would be occasional Saturday use between the hours of 0900 – 1600 to facilitate training purposes, which in your Officers' view would not be unduly harmful. A condition can also be imposed on the use of air conditioning units so that they only operate during these 'trading' hours. In the light of these factors, Officers consider that any impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties would be acceptable.
- 5.9 The parking and access arrangements proposed are considered acceptable. The on site parking provision shown (2 disabled spaces) is considered to be sufficient, given the sustainable location of the site, with the West Way Shoppers car park being approximately 200m away and other bus services in the vicinity. A condition requiring the submission of a Green Travel Plan is requested by the County Engineer who, subject to conditions, raises no objections.
- 5.10 Members will be aware of the ongoing drainage problems in this locality. In this respect the proposal is not considered to be of a size that would overwhelm the existing network, given the existing outflow from the existing dwelling. Furthermore, Thames Water and the Drainage Engineer have raised no objection to this specific proposal.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:*

1. *TL1 – Time limit.*
2. *MC2 – Materials.*
3. *Green Travel Plan to be submitted.*
4. *HY25 – Car parking layout in accordance with specified plan.*
5. *Cycle parking details to be submitted and provided on site prior to first occupation.*
6. *Details of air conditioning plant to be submitted and not to be operated outside the hours of 1800 – 0800 Monday to Friday, 1700 – 0800 Saturday and at no times on Sundays or Bank Holidays without the prior grant of planning permission.*