

Item No. 9**SCHEDULE B**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/11/03406/FULL
LOCATION	Houghton Regis Medical Centre, Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EZ
PROPOSAL	Single storey front extension.
PARISH	Houghton Regis
WARD	Tithe Farm
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr Williams
CASE OFFICER	Donna Lavender
DATE REGISTERED	23 September 2011
EXPIRY DATE	18 November 2011
APPLICANT	Houghton Regis Medical Centre
AGENT	Braund Technical Services
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Called in by Ward Councillor P Williams due to contentious late opening hours of proposed pharmacy
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Site Location:

The application site consists of a medical centre which lies on the corner of Peel Street and Tithe Farm Road, opposite the Bedford Square Shopping Centre. The building is a single storey structure with its main entrance doors facing Tithe Farm Road.

The Application:

Permission is sought for the erection of a single storey front extension including a disabled access ramp which would provide pharmaceutical services and an entrance and lobby to the main surgery.

The originally proposed extension would have measured approximately 5 metres in depth, 15.2 metres in width and would have had an overall height of 5.1 metres incorporating a gable roof design.

However during the life of the planning application, revisions have been received due to the previous obstruction of a public right of way and therefore the proposed extension would now measure approximately 4.5 metres in depth at its maximum and 2.4 metres at its minimum, 15.3 metres in width and would have an overall height of 3 metres incorporating a flat roof.

The pharmacy opening hours would be 08:00 - 24:00 (Monday - Friday), 09:00 - 23:00 (Saturday) and 10:00 - 16:00 (Sunday).

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies (PPG & PPS)

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)
PPS4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth)
PPG13 (Transport)

Regional Spatial Strategy East of England Plan (May 2008)

ENV7 (Quality in the Built Environment)
SS1 (Achieving Sustainable Development)
T14 (Parking)

Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011

None

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

BE8 (Design Considerations)
T10 (Parking - New Developments)

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide: A Guide for Development (2010)

Planning History

Application:	Planning	Number:	SB/96/00369
Validated:	16/05/1996	Type:	Full Application
Status:	Decided	Date:	28/06/1996
Summary:		Decision:	Grant Planning Permission
Description:	ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY FRONT AND FIRST FLOOR MEZZANINE EXTENSIONS. PEEL STREET CLINIC, PEEL STREET, HOUGHTON REGIS.		

Application:	Planning	Number:	SB/97/00390
Validated:	18/07/1997	Type:	Full Application
Status:	Decided	Date:	03/09/1997
Summary:		Decision:	Grant Planning Permission
Description:	ERECTION OF SECURITY FENCE/GATES AND WINDOW GRILLES. PEEL STREET CLINIC, PEEL STREET, HOUGHTON REGIS.		

Application:	Planning	Number:	CB/11/03405/FULL
Validated:	23/09/2011	Type:	Full Application
Status:	Registered	Date:	
Summary:		Decision:	Grant Planning Permission
Description:	Single storey front extension.		

**Representations:
(Parish & Neighbours)**

Town Council

Houghton Regis Town Council (12/10/11) - Object as land that is proposed to be built upon is amenity land.

Neighbours

Objections received:

18 Park Avenue, H/Regis (17/10/11) - Concerns expressed relating to:

- Potential for more attempts of break in's to the premises;
- Any new lighting should be angled to avoid any light pollution;
- Parking and construction deliveries within Park Avenue would greatly affect the residents.

Additional comments received on (20/10/11) - raising an objection to the later pharmacy opening hours owing to the following reasons:

- Noise disturbance to local residents;
- Potential to generate antisocial behaviour and additional break in's;
- Unwelcome attention from drug dependent users;
- Most late night opening chemists are located within supermarkets.

15 Park Avenue, H/Regis (19/10/11) - Objections received owing to the following reasons:

- Additional traffic generation;
- Noise disturbance;
- Parking Pressures.

Support received:

1 Park Avenue, H/Regis (18/10/11) - Support given to the application due to sympathetic design and beneficial to the residents of Houghton Regis.

5 Peel Street, H/Regis (24/10/11) - Support given as extended opening hours to a pharmacy in conjunction with the surgery would be beneficial to residents and would stop the requirement to travel into adjoining towns for medication.

32 Dellmont Road, H/Regis (24/10/11) - Support as residents would not need to travel for prescriptions.

Consultations/Publicity responses

1. CBC Sustainable Transport Officer (11/10/11) - Objects to the granting of planning permission due to the lack of a sustainable travel plan.

Further comments received on 17/11/10 after the reconsultation was made due to revised plans and travel plan, comments include that the Travel Plan fails to:
 - fully appraise the policy context around travel planning;
 - confirm existing staff numbers and working patterns;
 - fully assess bus/rail services and pedestrian/cycle paths;
 - provide sufficient details on measures to promote the travel plan;
 - include measurable targets.
2. CBC Rights of Way Officer (12/10/11) - Objects to the development proposed as would obstruct a public right of way. (Any comments with regard to the amended plans will be reported at Committee.)
3. CBC Building Control Officer (13/10/11) - Comments received in respect to the access ramp that consideration should be given to steps to compliment the ramp proposed and the ramp should lead to a level landing.
4. Police Architectural Liaison Officer (07/11/11) - No objection.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are:

1. Justification
2. Design Considerations
3. Affect on the Local Amenity
4. Highway Safety & Parking Considerations
5. Other Issues

Considerations

1. Justification

The pharmacy has been applied for at the demand and request of the patients of the Houghton Regis Medical Centre. At current the pharmaceutical services available within Houghton Regis and specifically Bedford Square which is most local to the surgery, only provides a service between the hours of 8:45 - 18:15

(Monday - Fridays). These opening hours are not sufficient to serve the patients demands from the medical centre due to the additional opening hours of the surgery being from 08:00 - 21:00 and often patients with urgent prescriptions are required to travel to neighbouring towns to find out of hours pharmacy's.

The applicant has stated that on many occasions, due to the lack of local pharmacy with late open hours and the restriction on many deprived or frail patients to have transportation to other pharmacy's within the District, that many patients are going without their urgent prescriptions and often being hospitalised, therefore adding further pressure on the hospitals emergency services.

The applicant has also stated that existing pharmacy is also unable to comply with the demand on certain medications required for the patients for the medical centre. The pharmacy directly related to the surgery would have a greater response to the demands of the patients of the surgery as it would have a better understanding of the types of medications that are required for their patients and therefore would be able to provide a better supply and demand.

Although the pharmacy is a small business it would generate employment for approximately 6 members of staff and the Council encourages proposals for additional local employment in the interest of both sustainable development and promotion of economic growth.

2. Design Considerations

The scale of the proposed extension is considered to be modest and proportionate to the host building and appropriate on this front elevation to the streetscene. The original pitched roof design of the proposed extension was considered to be more complimentary to the host building than the presently proposed flat roof to the front elevation. However due to the reduced and staggered footprint of the revised extension, it may be difficult to achieve the original roof design. Alternative roof designs are being explored which are both similar to the original design and more complimentary to the host building and any revisions will be reported at Committee.

3. Affect on the Local Amenity

The works to be carried out on the premises are to the front elevation which fronts onto the car parking area and the entrance to both the pharmacy and medical centre are to be located central to the building where the existing access to the building is positioned. The entrance would not be in significantly close proximity to any residential property and therefore it is considered that the local amenity would not be directly affected any more than existing.

The proposed late serving hatch would be located on the eastern most part of the principal elevation. An alleyway separates the building from the rear garden of the closest residential property of 16 Park Avenue. Whilst the late hours serving hatch would be provided in fairly close proximity to the rear garden of the closest residential property, it is not considered that it would greatly impact on the amenity of this local resident due to the fact that it would be closest to their rear garden space and not main living area of their property and the hatch would only be used for quick collections from the pharmacy, whereby the patients would not be lingering for any long periods of time.

The pharmacy would also be restricted by the Medical Centre to the sale of medication and medical supplies and therefore the level of activity within the store would not be comparative to a general convenience store and therefore the use should not generate the level of custom which would result in a significant amount of users visiting the store or staying for lengthy periods of time.

Concerns have been raised about the use of the car park adjacent to the medical centre rather than the car parking area to the front of the medical centre for the use of the pharmacy however in terms of convenience it is likely that the car park in front of the centre is most likely used and the medical centre car parking area could be restricted at certain times of the day in order to minimise the impact on traffic generation and parking in Park Avenue itself, in order to minimise the affect on the residential amenity.

Concerns have also been expressed regarding further possible break in's to the surgery. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has offered no objections in this regard and like the rest of the main building, any particular vulnerable windows are to be protected by shutters or are proposed at a higher level which would make breaking an entry different to accomplish. The fact that the premises will be used till late at night may be a deterrent for such break in's as passing customers may provide natural surveillance to the surrounding area.

Concerns have also been raised about the potential for obstruction to Park Avenue itself and some parking spaces of the main car parking area in front of the surgery during the construction of the proposed extension. In this case, this is a matter better dealt with through Highways enforcement.

4. Transportation & Parking Considerations

The proposed pharmacy and extended opening hours would provide a service for the entirety of Houghton Regis, which is both local and considered to be sustainable. This would restrict the need for local residents to travel to adjacent towns to purchase prescriptions and therefore would limit the level of car journeys outside of the town centre and improve the towns overall carbon footprint.

A travel plan is also being established for the surgery and pharmacy which would address the need for those working within and using both the pharmacy and surgery, to use alternative modes of transportation to the surgery and therefore the level of parking requirements can be reduced and the pharmacy could have a positive effect on the sustainable transportation within the town itself. A condition will be imposed to provide an adequate travel plan which can be monitored to ensure that targets can be successfully achieved.

Five additional employees are proposed to run the pharmacy, three of which will be working on part time basis. The existing medical centre car park has in the region of 10 car parking spaces, of which half are currently unoccupied. This is due to the fact that a number of staff at the surgery are local to the area or use public transportation. One car parking space is required for each professional member of staff and only one car parking space is required for 3 non-professional members of staff to comply with the Councils Parking Standards. The surgery has only 4 doctors at the centre at any one given time and therefore

whilst 4 parking spaces are in consistent use, there is still sufficient space left for the other workers on the site and the Highways Officer has offered no objection in regards to insufficient parking.

5. Other Issues

The originally proposed front extension obstructed a public right of way however since this notification, the extension has been reduced to no longer obstruct or incorporate the public right of way. No further objections have been received from the Councils Rights of Way officer to date, however any further comments that may be raised about the revised plans, will be reported at committee.

Objections were received from the Town Council who stated that they objected to the incorporation of amenity land. The land in question is not classed as amenity and whilst some landscaping has been provided to the front of the building which may have given this impression, this was part of a mitigation method of a previous planning approval and much of the landscaping is required to be removed due to its obstruction of the public right of way.

Objections have been raised suggesting that restrictions have been placed on previously granted schemes in relation to pharmacy opening hours. However, no such restrictions have been placed on any proposed or permitted developments within the area to not allow pharmacies to be provided for extended opening hours as this would be seen to restrict both economic activity and the accessibility of services within the town. The proposed pharmacy would only supply medication and medical supplies and therefore would not detract the custom from the existing pharmacy within Bedford Square which has no restriction on the sale of goods which would enhance their level of consumer activity.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following:

- 1 The development shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 **Before occupation of the development hereby approved, details of a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the recommendations of the Travel Plan shall be implemented in full within 6 months of the development being occupied. In addition, the plan shall be monitored and the results of this monitoring be reviewed on an annual basis and further recommendations for improvements shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: To reduce reliance on the private car by promoting public transport and sustainable modes of transport.

- 3 The pharmacy building shall only be open to customers between the hours of 08:00 am to 12:00pm Mondays to Fridays, 09:00 am to 11:00pm on Saturdays, and 10:00am - 04:00pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Between the hours of 08:00pm - 12:00pm Mondays to Fridays and 08:00pm - 11:00pm on Saturdays there shall be no access to the pharmacy other than through the dispensing hatch.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities which the occupiers of neighbouring properties might reasonably expect to enjoy.

- 4 New external brickwork and roofing materials shall match those of the existing building as closely as possible.

Reason: To ensure that the development is in keeping with the existing building.
(Policy BE8 S.B.L.P.R).

- 5 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers CBC/001, 11/1155/01, 11/1155/05 Rev B & 11/1155/03.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reasons for Granting

The proposed front extension would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and the proposed extension and pharmacy open hours would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, therefore by reason of the siting, design and location of the extension, it is in conformity with Policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan (May 2008); Policies BE8 and H8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review 2004 and National Planning Policy Statement 1 "Delivering Sustainable Development". It is further in conformity with the technical guidance Design in Central Bedfordshire, A Guide for Development 2010.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, the Council hereby certify that the proposal as hereby approved conforms with the relevant policies of the Development Plan comprising of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 and the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review and material considerations do not indicate otherwise. The policies which refer are as follows:

East of England Plan (May 2008)

ENV7 (Quality of the Built Environment)

SS1 (Achieving Sustainable Development)

T14 (Parking)

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review

BE8 (Design Considerations)

T10 (Parking)

2. In accordance with Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 (BSP) and the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR).
3. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.
4. No materials or vehicles associated with the development should be left on or near the public footpath which may cause a hazard or inconvenience to users. The applicant must ensure that there is no encroachment beyond the property's legal boundary onto the width of the public footpath. However if a footpath closure is needed this will require at least six weeks notice and any footpath closure would not apply to the access to the garages. Should scaffolding be required over the public footpath, the Council's Highway department would also require notice of this so that a scaffolding licence can be processed and granted.
5. Please note that the unnumbered drawings submitted in connection with this application have been given unique numbers by the Local Planning Authority. The numbers can be sourced by examining the plans on the View a Planning Application pages of the Council's website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

DECISION

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