

Supporting Planning Statement

Proposed rehabilitation studio - Fontwell and Southbourne Physiotherapy and Hydrotherapy Clinic - The Wolds Fontwell Avenue, Eastergate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 6RU

1.0 The site and its surroundings

- 1.1 The application site is located on the western side of the A29 (Fontwell Avenue), forming part of a linear enclave of development, approximately 170 metres to the south of its junction with Eastergate Lane to the north and 380 metres north of its junction with Nyton Road.
- 1.2 The site and surroundings lie within the rural area as defined in relevant policy documents, although possesses a semi-urban character by reason of sporadic development that straddles the highway from Nyton Road to the south to its junction with the A27 to the north. To the west of the application site is a recently established arboretum.
- 1.3 The nature of existing development in the area is a mixture of residential dwellings with other land and buildings used for a range of commercial purposes. The Wolds typifies this mixture, comprising a mixed use of an established physiotherapy and hydrotherapy clinic principally on the ground floor, with a residential flat above (AL/57/00 and AL/118/07).
- 1.4 The building is two storeys in height, reflecting the scale and form of residential properties nearby. The front of the premises is dedicated to access, turning and parking. To the rear is a hydrotherapy facility contained in a purpose-designed detached outbuilding, reached by a continuation of the access drive along the southern flank of the property. The remainder of the land to the rear of the premises is partially laid to grass (along the western margin), with the remainder gravelled and utilised for informal parking.
- 1.5 The rear of the property where the proposed rehabilitation studio is to be located is visually well contained. The west boundary comprises a low hedgerow, with the east boundary, shared with 'Freya' is robustly screened with tall fencing and mature shrub planting.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 The application proposal is for the erection of a modest single storey detached outbuilding adjacent to the existing hydrotherapy unit to provide a physiotherapy rehabilitation studio to enable complementary treatment programmes to be undertaken by current patients. The building is designed as a single space for maximum flexibility and to accommodate low-impact exercise treatments, such as Gait Analysis, Biomechanics, Yoga, Tai Chi and Pilates.
- 2.2 The proposed rehabilitation studio measures 13.5 metres by 5.0 metres, giving a footprint of 67 square metres. The elevations will be timber clad under a plain clay tiled roof. The overall height of the building would be 4.8 metres.
- 2.3 Externally, the space is reorganised to provide 8 further parking spaces, identified by block pavements, with the remaining area surfaced in a permeable medium. Three small outbuildings currently present on the site are to be removed.

3.0 Pre-application advice

The applicant has acted proactively and sought pre-application advice from Arun District Council on the principle of the proposed development and potential issues to be addressed (PAA/193/17). A copy of that advice is attached as **APPENDIX 1** to this statement. In summary, the advice gives positive support to this proposal.

4.0 Relevant planning policies

- 4.1 National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework'). The proposal is consistent with the three sustainable dimensions of the Framework (paragraphs 7, 14). Paragraphs 18 and 19 set out the Government's support for economic development, which in respect of this proposal, is reinforced by paragraph 28 (Section 3). This section states that planning policies should, inter alia;

'...support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;

promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship'.

- 4.2 Paragraphs 56, 60 and 61 support good design and promotion of development that reflects local distinctiveness and its integration with its surroundings.
- 4.3 Relevant Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified in the pre-application advice received from Arun District Council (attached) and for conciseness is not repeated here.

- 4.4 Collectively, there is positive policy support for this modest development proposal at both National and local level. This conclusion is reflected in the pre-application advice received from the LPA.

5.0 Planning assessment

- 5.1 The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and on residential amenity. In assessing this, the following matters are discussed:

The business case for the development;

The design and setting of the proposed development and relationship with adjoining properties;

Potential flood risk;

Impact on trees.

Business statement

- 5.2 The clinic runs on private contracts but receives private referrals from NHS GP's and consultants. The clinic enjoys very strong links with local GP's and consultants and is able to compliment services offered by the NHS, which are under increasing pressure. The rehabilitation unit will provide the opportunity to increase the treatment options and services that can be offered. The range of services currently offered are as follows:

- Physiotherapy
- Sports Therapy
- Podiatry
- Holistic Therapy

- 5.3 A growing body of evidence is highlighting the need to increase physical activity to decrease the incidence of preventable ill health. The provision of small, clinical classes that the rehabilitation unit seeks to facilitate aims to help the local community achieve this.

- 5.4 There is currently no other, non NHS facility of this type (i.e. combining Physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and rehabilitation unit on one site) in the local area. The provision of a rehabilitation unit would make Fontwell Physio a unique facility for the Arun District.

- 5.5 The clinic currently sees 20-30 patients a day in one of the three existing 3 clinic rooms. A number of these existing clients will be treated in the rehabilitation studio rather than the clinic and therefore is not intended to intensify the use of the clinic. The proposed unit is simply to give another treatment option for existing clients. The aim is to accommodate two to three classes per day (Yoga/Pilates etc), with a maximum of 6 persons in a class (derived from the clinic's existing client base)

5.6 The following number of staff are currently employed, but are not all on site at the same time:

- 4 employed clerical staff
- 5 physiotherapists (self – employed)
- 1 sports therapist (self - employed)
- 1 podiatrist
- 1 holistic therapist

The intention is to recruit two personal trainers at REPS level 3 which will allow them to assist in the rehabilitation unit. This will be on a self-employed basis.

5.7 The rehabilitation unit will therefore support the creation and retention of employment and services in a rural area and increase the accessibility for residents to medical facilities.

Design and relationship with adjoining properties

5.8 The building is modest in scale and designed to be subservient to both the principal building and the adjoining hydrotherapy facility and does not result in overdevelopment of the site. The palette of materials compliment those use on the existing buildings, ensuring that the resultant building reflects local distinctiveness.

5.9 Fenestration comprises high level windows in the west elevation overlooking the adjoining arboretum. Three sets of bi-fold doors are inserted into the east elevation, with further set to south elevation facing the hydrotherapy building to provide natural light to the internal space. Although situated in the rural area, in the context of the character of existing development surrounding the application site, the immediate area is not considered to possess intrinsically dark skies. However, no roof lights are proposed in the building.

5.10 Its siting at the rear of the main clinic and relatively low height of building and intervening screening on east boundary ensures that the development will be discretely located with minimal impact on the outlook or living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties. The current parking arrangements are to be re-ordered and improved with revised surfacing to minimise any potential disturbance from noise.

Flood risk

5.11 The site lies within flood zone 1 (lowest risk). The proposed studio will result in a slight increase in the amount of impermeable area and increase in surface water discharge from the building itself. The proposal will be to incorporate a positive drainage solution, with infiltration the preferred approach, as informed by percolation tests by specialists. This is likely to

adequately address surface water discharge resulting from the building itself without increasing flood risk elsewhere in the catchment.

- 5.12 The surfacing medium for the parking and turning areas are to be a permeable material to further ensure controlled absorption of surface water within the site.

Impact on trees

- 5.13 A separate tree survey and report has been carried out by Bernie Harverson. The proposed studio is located approximately 1.0 metre inside the west boundary. The land west of this boundary is planted as an arboretum. The trees here are collectively identified as being category A. The RPA's of this grouping is some distance from the proposed building and therefore unaffected by the proposed development. A number of mature trees are situated within the neighbouring garden to the north, but the building is clearly outside the RPA's of any notable trees within this area.
- 5.14 The boundary planting along the eastern margin (Group 1) is a line of mainly mixed species described as category B. This group is acknowledged as being important in providing an effective filter and is to be retained but would be unaffected by the proposed development in any event.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 It is concluded that the principle of the proposed development is supported both by national and relevant local planning policy and by pre-application advice. There is both an economic and social benefit to the proposal and the modest design, siting and layout of the rehabilitation studio is considered reflective of local distinctiveness and is sympathetic to the amenities of adjoining residents. Therefore, the proposal is considered to meet the three dimensions of sustainability set out in the National Planning Policy Guidance.
- 6.2 In terms of the overall planning balance, the proposed development would not cause any demonstrable harm to any interest of acknowledged importance and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.