

Section '3' - Applications recommended for PERMISSION, APPROVAL or CONSENT

Application No : 13/03987/FULL3

Ward:
Chelsfield And Pratts
Bottom

Address : 29 Southcroft Road Orpington BR6 9QG

OS Grid Ref: E: 545388 N: 165284

Applicant : Dr R Chelvan

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Change of use of dwelling from residential (Class C3) use to doctors surgery (Class D1).

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
Open Space Deficiency

Proposal

This proposal involves the change of use of a detached bungalow to a doctors surgery (Class D1). It will replace an existing local practice in Tubbenden Lane. The proposed surgery will operate Monday to Friday and incorporate three consultation rooms. The applicant has stated that a maximum of one doctor, one nurse and a receptionist will be based at the practice at any one time. No significant alterations or extensions are proposed to the existing building, although the proposed floor plans show that disabled access will be provided at the main entrance at the front. The site incorporates two off-street parking spaces.

The application is accompanied by a supporting letter which is summarised below:

- the proposed site provides more suitable premises than the existing Tubbenden Lane practice, and may be something of an interim measure until such time that the new "Health and Wellbeing Centre" opens in Orpington
- parking survey previously conducted shows that 56.9% of patients walk to the existing premises; 12.5% travel by public transport; and 30.6% by car
- patients attending the premises do so strictly on an appointment basis
- only 3 staff will work at the premises at any one time (one doctor, one nurse, one receptionist)

Location

The application site is located along Southcroft Road - a residential street - and is situated approximately 150 metres away from the junction with Tubbenden Lane.

Comments from Local Residents

A number of responses have been received both in support of and in opposition to the proposal which can be summarised as follows:

Objections

- residential road unsuitable for a GP practice
- parking restrictions are in place at Southcroft Road
- poor off-street parking facilities at the site
- hazardous incline into the site premises
- parking and traffic problems will be accentuated
- despite existing restrictions, car parking has increased in the road
- uncertainty if/when the proposed health and wellbeing centre will open in Orpington
- existing premises should be upgraded
- town centre location would be more appropriate
- previous application was withdrawn
- disturbance to surrounding residents
- previous application was not supported by the then-NHS primary care premises advisor
- premises are inadequate and do not comply with relevant standards to accommodate a surgery
- existing surgery already meets community requirements
- traffic survey is inadequate
- premises are poorly located

Support

- this surgery is an integral part of the community
- existing premises are of a poor standard
- proposed surgery is conveniently located

Comments from Consultees

No technical highways objections are raised, subject to conditions limiting the number of staff based at the practice.

No Environmental Health objections have been raised.

The following comments summarised below were received from NHS England, the responsible commissioning body:

- existing Tubbenden Lane premises have a number of deficiencies. As such, NHS England has ceased to commission some clinical services from that building, which requires patients registered with the practice to attend their central Bromley surgery for invasive procedures such as minor surgery
- there are a number of deficiencies concerning these proposed premises, including: it will not meet current standards in a number of areas and principally in respect of accommodation and the sizing of clinical rooms
- door and corridor opening should be widened
- NHS England remains committed to considering this application when it is satisfied that the building complies with minimum requirements and subject to planning permission being forthcoming

Planning Considerations

Policies BE1 (Design of New Development), C1 (Community Facilities), C3 (Access to Buildings for People with Disabilities) C4 (Health Facilities), H1 (Housing Supply) and T3 (Parking) of the Unitary Development Plan apply to the development and should be given due consideration.

Planning History

Under ref. 86/02225, permission was granted for a single storey rear extension.

Under ref. 10/03094, a similar application to this application proposing a change of use from residential (Class C3) to doctors surgery (Class D1) was considered by Members at a Planning Sub-Committee in February 2011. The application was deferred by Members and subsequently withdrawn.

Conclusions

The main issues for consideration relate to the contribution that this proposal will provide in respect to health services in the local community, and its impact on neighbouring amenity and parking provision.

Members should consider this proposal on the basis of whether the principle of the change of use is acceptable. Matters relating to the internal configuration, layout and access of the proposed surgery are subject to separate legislation and control, these falling under the remit of building and healthcare regulations.

Policies C1 and C4 of the UDP represent key considerations in assessing this proposal. These seek to ensure that such community-based development meets a specific health need, and that such facilities are accessible by modes of transport other than by car and accessible to members of the community that it is intended to serve.

The proposed general practice will replace an existing local facility whose immediate catchment is based around Tubbenden Lane and several outer-lying residential roads which form a distinct and populous neighbourhood of Orpington (south west of the railway line). Whilst the practice will relocate from Tubbenden

Lane which boasts a local bus service and is located within closer proximity to Orpington railway station, the proposed site will maintain a similar catchment being within 500 metres of the existing site and ensure that local residents continue to benefit from a local and accessible GP presence. In that sense the proposal will assist in meeting an identified health need within more appropriate premises. The need for improved facilities is set out clearly by the applicant and therefore the loss of a residential unit to accommodate these needs would be acceptable under Policy H1 (iii).

With regard to concerns relating to noise and disturbance and parking and traffic congestion, information relating to parking along Southcroft Road indicates that around 4 - 6 vehicles are parked on street at one time which roughly equates to surveys undertaken by the Council. There are waiting restrictions in the road in force at various times of the day, mainly one-hour restrictions to prevent long-term parking. The survey submitted by the applicant of the existing Tubbenden Lane practice shows that about 30% travel to the surgery by car with a maximum of 9 cars in one day. Even allowing for an increase in the number of patients with a new upgraded surgery, the number of car journeys generated is still estimated to be relatively low.

Taking the above matters into account it is not considered that this proposal would cause any harm to conditions in the highway. Furthermore, given the physical constraints posed by the application property, and by means of suggested conditions limiting the number of primary care professionals based in the practice, it is not considered that this proposal would result in a detrimental impact on local traffic and parking conditions. These factors would also be likely to limit the impact of the development in respect of local residents' living conditions, particularly in view the limits placed on the number of health professions and the effect of this on visitor numbers.

Whilst this proposal does not provide for a long-term strategy for healthcare provision in the local area, it is considered that the building at Southcroft Road represents a clear improvement in the standard of accommodation in relation to the existing premises at Tubbenden Lane, and is supported by UDP policies. Furthermore, its impact on neighbouring amenity, or on general highway and parking conditions, is not considered unacceptable, so as to warrant refusal.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on files refs. 10/03094 and 13/03987, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
 ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years
- 2 There shall be no patients admitted to the premises before 07:30 or after 19:00 Monday to Friday and not on any Saturday, Sunday or Public/Bank Holiday.

- ACJ05R J05 reason BE1
- 3 No more than 2 primary healthcare professionals (or part time equivalents) shall work at the surgery at any one time.
- ACI12R I12 reason (1 insert) BE1
- 4 ACJ01 Restriction on use (2 inserts) a doctor's surgery D1
- Reason:** To enable the Council to control future changes of use in the interest of neighbouring amenities and to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 This planning permission relates solely to the change of use of the premises, and not requirements relating to NHS specifications, Building Regulations and the 1995 Disability Act which the applicant is advised to fulfil before the use hereby permitted commences.

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"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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