

Planning Services

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO:	PL/5/2011/0162
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION	MEDICAL CENTRE & ANCILLARY CHEMIST
NAME OF APPLICANT	SALFORD ESTATES (NO. 2) LTD
SITE ADDRESS	LAND OFF ST ADENS WAY, PETERLEE
ELECTORAL DIVISION	PETERLEE EAST
CASE OFFICER	Barry Gavillet 0191 5274305 barry.gavillet@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSAL

Site:

1. This application site comprises 0.46 hectares of vacant grass land and sits on the edge of the town centre, in close proximity to a number of land uses including commercial, leisure and civic uses. The site is approximately 200m from the main shops within Peterlee and is accessed on foot by an existing pedestrian/cyclist underpass on St Cuthbert's Road West. The site is directly neighbouring the existing Peterlee Leisure Centre. Directly to the north is the existing Medical Centre with Castle Dene Shopping Centre beyond this. To the south of the proposed site is Peterlee Police Station with mainly residential properties to the east.

Proposal:

2. The proposal is intended as a replacement for the existing medical centre, which would need to be relocated as part of the approved retail development proposal. The application seeks consent for a two storey Medical Centre with ancillary pharmacy. The proposed building is generally two storeys creating an overall floor space of 633sq.m at ground floor and 474sq.m at first floor which would be 396.4sqm larger than the existing Medical Centre. The replacement Medical Centre will contain all of the existing facilities that are currently available, catering for the existing six GP's and it will also have capacity for a dentist. The internal layout of the building has been designed in conjunction with the doctors who will run the facility. The ancillary pharmacy will be integrated within the Medical Centre and will not operate independently (out of surgery hours).
3. The Medical Centre would accommodate 15 practitioners, 16 staff, 24 patients therefore there are a total of 32 car parking spaces on the site 3 of which are

disabled. The current Medical Centre is located adjacent to the car park of the Castle Dene Shopping Centre which has no designated parking, meaning that patients use the Castle Dene Shopping Centre car park. It is proposed that a new access to the site is taken from St Adens Way. Due to the location of the site adjacent to the town centre it is within walking distance of the town centre along with the bus station on Bede Way and the surrounding residential areas.

4. The proposal is reported to the planning committee as it constitutes a major development.

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant

PLANNING POLICY

5. NATIONAL POLICY:

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development sets out the Governments overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning System.

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant. The full text can be accessed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements>

6. REGIONAL POLICY:

The North East of England Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) July 2008, sets out the broad spatial development strategy for the North East region for the period of 2004 to 2021. The RSS sets out the region's housing provision and the priorities in economic development, retail growth, transport investment, the environment, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. Some policies have an end date of 2021 but the overall vision, strategy, and general policies will guide development over a longer timescale. Of particular relevance are the following policies:

Policy 1 - Strategies, plans and programmes should support a renaissance throughout the North East

Policy 2 - Seeks to embed sustainable criteria through out the development process and influence the way in which people take about where to live and work; how to travel; how to dispose of waste; and how to use energy and other natural resources efficiently.

Policy 3 -The RSS recognises that climate change is the single most significant issue that affects global society in the 21st century. Policy 3 will seek to ensure that the location of development, encouraging sustainable forms of transport, encouraging and supporting use of renewable energy sources, and waste management all aids in the reduction of climate change.

Policy 4 - National advice and the first RSS for the North East advocated a sequential approach to the identification of sites for development, recognising the need to make the

best use of land and optimize the development of previously developed land and buildings in sustainable locations.

Policy 6 - Plans, strategies and programmes should support and incorporate the locational strategy to maximise the major assets and opportunities available in the North East and to regenerate those areas affected by social, economic and environmental problems.

Policy 7 - Seeks to promote the need to reduce the impact of travel demand particularly by promoting public transport, travel plans, cycling and walking, as well as the need to reduce long distance travel, particularly by private car, by focusing development in urban areas with good access to public transport.

Policy 8 - Seeks to promote measures such as high quality design in all development and redevelopment and promoting development that is sympathetic to its surroundings.

Policy 9 - Strategies, plans and programmes, and planning proposals should support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the Tyne & Wear City-Region.

Policy 38 - Sets out that in advance of locally set targets, major developments should secure at least 10% of their energy supply from decentralised or low-carbon sources.

In July 2010 the Local Government Secretary signalled his intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies with immediate effect, and that this was to be treated as a material consideration in subsequent planning decisions. This was successfully challenged in the High Court in November 2010, thus for the moment reinstating the RSS. However, it remains the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies when the forthcoming Local Government Bill becomes law, and it is a matter for each Planning Authority to decide how much weight can now be attached to this intention.

7. LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

District of Easington Local Plan

Policy 1- Due regard will be had to the development plan when determining planning applications. Account will be taken as to whether the proposed development accords with sustainable development principles while benefiting the community and local economy. The location, design and layout will also need to accord with saved policies 3, 7, 14-18, 22 and 35-38.

Policy 35 - The design and layout of development should consider energy conservation and efficient use of energy, reflect the scale and character of adjacent buildings, provide adequate open space and have no serious adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents or occupiers.

Policy 36 - The design and layout of development should ensure good access and encourage alternative means of travel to the private car.

Policy 37 - The design and layout of development should seek to minimise the level of parking provision (other than for cyclists and disabled people).

Policy 38 - The design and layout of development should have due regard to personal safety and security of property, particularly in hours of darkness.

Policy 95 - Health centres, doctors', dentists' and other surgeries will be approved provided they are located within or on the edge of town and local centres, do not adversely affect local amenity and accord with policies 36 and 37.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=7534>

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

8. STATUTORY RESPONSES:

Town Council – No response.

Durham Constabulary – No objections, informal advice offered.

Northumbrian Water – No objections.

9. INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

Low Carbon Officer – No objections subject to renewable energy conditions.

Ecology Officer – No objections subject to mitigation in ecology studies being conditioned.

Design Officer – No objections.

Tree Officer – No objections.

Highways Officer – No objections subject to conditions relating to amendments to road markings and the creation of a visibility splay.

Planning Policy – No objections. The proposal is in a sustainable location and would improve the general environmental character of the area.

10. PUBLIC RESPONSES:

The application has been advertised by way of a press notice, site notice and individual letters to surrounding occupiers. No responses have been received.

11. APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

The application seeks consent for a new Medical Centre on land off St. Aden's Way next to Peterlee Leisure Centre Peterlee. The proposals have the full support of Peterlee Health Centre GP Partners and the PCT. The proposals are considered by the GP Partners and PCT to be key to securing the long-term future of Peterlee Town Centre and providing replacement facilities for health which is fit for the future.

The application seeks detailed planning consent for a Medical Centre to replace the existing Peterlee Medical Centre situated on the opposite side of St Cuthbert's Road. The existing Medical Centre site and building occupies part of a site which is subject to development proposals recently approved by Durham County Council. The proposed demolition of the existing Medical Centre will, as consented, make way for a new foodstore and its associated car parking (reference PL/5/2010/0444). The foodstore proposals identified above was also made by SEL.

The proposed location of the unit is on the edge of the town centre as detailed in the Easington Local Plan 2001 (Saved 2007). The site is currently vacant grassland which was previously allocated within the local plan for a range and mix of uses. Policy P17 has now been deleted, although the principle of developing this site remains. The Dene which runs to the west of the site will not be adversely impacted on by the development and there are no impacts on the surrounding natural environment.

The townscape and visual assessment undertaken for the Castle Dene application identified that the townscape of Peterlee has low sensitivity and is able to accommodate substantial change. Development of the Medical Centre would be seen in combination with the existing leisure centre and wider town centre to the north and, owing to its proximity, would relate closely to the regeneration of the town centre as a whole.

The proposal is considered to be policy compliant and there are no other material considerations which indicate otherwise. Members are requested to support the approval of this application to ensure that the existing facilities which over 50 years old are replaced with modern facilities to serve the needs of Peterlee residents.

The above represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file which can be viewed at <http://planning.easington.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=113620>. Officer analysis of the issues raised and discussion as to their relevance to the proposal and recommendation made is contained below

PLANNING CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT

The main planning considerations relating to this application are the accordance with relevant planning policies, the layout and design of the development, highways issues, ecology and renewable energy.

In terms of national policy, Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development will be discussed as it has been identified as a relevant national planning policy document when determining applications such as this. Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development states that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:

- Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life;
- Contributing a sustainable economic development;
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside and existing communities;
- Ensuring high quality developments through good and inclusive design, and effective resources;
- Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.

It is considered that the development would support the community by offering a Medical Centre in the town centre area for residents of Peterlee and the surrounding area. Due to the central location of this facility it could be easily accessed by both pedestrians and users of public transport and therefore it is considered that the site is in a sustainable location for this type of development.

Policy 24 of the Regional Spatial Strategy (Delivering Sustainable Communities) is the most relevant regional policy with regard to this application. This policy states that strategies,

plans and programmes and planning proposals, should assess the suitability of land for development and the contribution that can be made by design in relation to the following criteria;

- the ability for movement needs and accessibility of development sites to homes, jobs, services and facilities to be well served by all modes of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport;
- the potential contribution of development to reducing Health and social inequalities including fuel poverty, and to meeting the needs of an ageing population and the disabled, through design and the provision of accessible Health, sports, community, recreational and other facilities.

As mentioned above it is considered that the proposed Medical Centre is in a sustainable central location within the town and therefore meets the aims of this RSS policy.

Saved Policy 95 of the District of Easington Local Plan specifically relates to the provision of health facilities and states that planning permission for Health centres, doctors, dentists and other surgeries will be approved provided that the proposal is:

- Located within or on the edge of defined and local shopping centres where possible;
- Has no serious adverse effect on the amenity of people living and working in the vicinity of the site and the existing use of adjacent land or buildings in terms of privacy, vision intrusion, noise, other pollutants and traffic generation;
- Makes provision for access and parking in accord with Policy 36 (Design for Access) and Policy 37 (Design for Parking).

The proposed replacement Medical Centre would be located on the edge of a defined town centre, in addition it is considered that the proposal would have no adverse effect on the amenity of people living and working in the vicinity of the site in terms of visual intrusion, noise or other pollutants and there are no objections raised by the Highways Officer with regard to access and parking provision. As such, it is considered that the proposals are in accordance with saved policy 95 of the District of Easington Local Plan.

12. Layout and design of the development

In terms of layout and design the proposed building is generally two storeys with a series of mono pitch roofs. Both wings of the building would be constructed from red facing brickwork, render, timber cladding and metallic silver cladding. The west wing is made up of a single mono-pitch roof starting at around 6.2m and rising to 9.0m. The east wing comprises two mono-pitch roofs running in opposite directions to create high level glazing along the central corridor at first floor. This element of the building varies in height between 6.0m and 7.8m to eaves. The surrounding buildings are generally of a similar size with the three storey police station to the south, albeit on a lower plateau while the leisure centre to the west is of a similar height to that of the proposed Medical Centre. It is considered that the design of the building is of good quality and that the scale reflects that of the surrounding buildings. As such, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with saved policy 35 of the District of Easington Local Plan which relates to layout and design.

13. Highways Issues

The Highways Officer has confirmed that the proposed 32 car parking spaces, including the 3 disabled persons car parking spaces comply with Durham County Council's Parking and Accessibility Guidelines and as such the level of car parking provision is acceptable. The Highways Officer has also welcomed the provision of 20 cycle parking spaces.

Conditions have been requested relating to improvement of the junction sight visibility splay to the south of the proposed junction onto St. Aidans Way and the amendments to the double yellow lines waiting restriction on St. Aidans Way. On the basis of these conditions being applied the proposals would be acceptable from a highways point of view and would accord with saved policies 36 and 37 of the District of Easington Local Plan.

14. Ecology

The Ecology Officer has stated that generally, the site is of low ecological quality and that all relevant species have been taken into consideration. However, it has been noted that the site is around 125 metres from two Great Crested Newt breeding ponds and that there is a small habitat link from the woodland and scrub to the west. As such, the applicants have produced a Precautionary Working Methods statement to address the risk of Great Crested Newts entering the site during the construction phase and also a Habitat Management and Biodiversity Strategy. The concluding mitigation in these documents should be conditioned as part of any planning approval in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity and Ecological Conservation.

15. Renewable Energy

Policy 38 of the Regional Spatial Strategy requires that all major developments include at least 10% decentralised and renewable energy or low carbon sources. In order to ensure that 10% of energy produced comes from a renewable source, a suitable condition should be imposed.

CONCLUSION

16. Overall it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in planning terms, conforming to relevant planning policies and guidance. The proposal is considered to be appropriate in terms of scale, design and layout and land use and is considered to be in a sustainable location for this type of development. It is considered that the proposal would provide a valuable, modern health facility for the surrounding community as well as promoting the regeneration of this part of Peterlee, therefore it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

17. That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions;

Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans. Plan References; Drg. No. 09937/P400 Rev A received 03/05/2011, Drg. No. 09937/P402 Rev. C, Drg. No. 09937/P403 Rev B received 21/07/2011 and Drg. No. 09937/P401 Rev E received 27/07/2011.

3. Prior to the opening of the Medical Centre and ancillary Chemist to the general public a revised scheme relating to the double yellow lines waiting restricting on St. Adens Way shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, thereafter being constructed in accordance with the approved details.
4. Prior to the opening of the Medical Centre and ancillary Chemist to the general public a revised scheme relating to the creation of the 2.4 x 70 metres junction sight visibility splay to the south of the proposed junction onto St. Aidans Way shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, thereafter being constructed in accordance with the approved details.
5. Notwithstanding any information submitted, development shall not commence until a scheme demonstrating how CO2 reduction and energy efficiency measures will be incorporated into the approved development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented and retained in accordance with the approved scheme thereafter.
6. No development shall take place unless in accordance with the mitigation detailed within the Habitat Management and Biodiversity Strategy, prepared by Marishal Thompson Group, dated April 2011.
7. No development shall take place unless in accordance with the mitigation detailed within the Great Crested Newt Method Statement, prepared by Marishal Thompson Group, dated 23rd August 2011.
8. No buildings shall be occupied by staff or visitors until a site specific travel plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
9. No development shall commence until a detailed landscaping scheme has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. No tree shall be felled or hedge removed until the landscape scheme, including any replacement tree and hedge planting, is approved as above. Any submitted scheme must be shown to comply with legislation protecting nesting birds and roosting bats. The landscape scheme shall include accurate plan based details of the following: Trees, hedges and shrubs scheduled for retention. Details of hard and soft landscaping including planting species, sizes, layout, densities, numbers. Details of planting procedures or specification. Finished topsoil levels and depths. Details of temporary topsoil and subsoil storage provision. Seeded or turf areas, habitat creation areas and details etc. Details of land and surface drainage. The establishment maintenance regime, including watering, rabbit protection, tree stakes, guards etc. The local planning authority shall be notified in advance of the start on site date and the completion date of all external works. Trees, hedges and shrubs shall not be removed without agreement within five years.

10. All planting, seeding or turfing and habitat creation in the approved details of the landscaping scheme shall be carried out in the first available planting season following the practical completion of the development. No tree shall be felled or hedge removed until the removal/felling is shown to comply with legislation protecting nesting birds and roosting bats. Any approved replacement tree or hedge planting shall be carried out within 12 months of felling and removals of existing trees and hedges. Any trees or plants which die, fail to flourish or are removed within a period of 5 years from the substantial completion of the development shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species. Replacements will be subject to the same conditions.
11. Notwithstanding any details of materials submitted with the application no development shall commence until samples of the external walling and roofing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

1. The development was considered acceptable having regard to the following development plan policies:

DISTRICT OF EASINGTON LOCAL PLAN	ENV35 - Environmental Design: Impact of Development
DISTRICT OF EASINGTON LOCAL PLAN	ENV36 - Design for Access and the Means of Travel
DISTRICT OF EASINGTON LOCAL PLAN	ENV37 - Design for Parking
DISTRICT OF EASINGTON LOCAL PLAN	ENV38 - Designing Out Crime
DISTRICT OF EASINGTON LOCAL PLAN	GEN01 - General Principles of Development
DISTRICT OF EASINGTON LOCAL PLAN	REC95 - Provision of health facilities
PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT/GUIDANCE	PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT/GUIDANCE	PPS9 - Biodiversity and geological conservation
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 1 - (North East Renaissance)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 2 - (Sustainable Development)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 3 - (Climate Change)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 4 - (Sequential Approach)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 6 - (Locational Strategy)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 7 - (Connectivity and Accessibility)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 8 - (Protecting and Enhancing the Environment)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 9 - (Tyne & Wear Region)
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY	Policy 38 - (Renewable Energy)

2. In particular the development was considered acceptable in terms of policy, design and layout, highways, ecology and renewable energy.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Submitted Application Forms and Plans.
- Design and Access Statement
- North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) July 2008
- District of Easington Local Plan 2001
- Planning Policy Statements / Guidance, PPS1, PPS9
- Consultation Responses

