

West Area Planning Committee

9th September 2014

Application Number: 14/01725/FUL

Decision Due by: 19th August 2014

Proposal: Change of use from Doctor's Surgery (Use Class D1) to 9 bedroom student accommodation (Use Class C2) and associated Porter Lodge on ground floor. . Creation of additional entrance to provide access into entrance hall. (Amended plans) (Amended description)

Site Address: North Oxford Medical Centre 96 Woodstock Road (Site plan at **Appendix 1**)

Ward: St Margarets Ward

Agent: Mr Alastair Bird

Applicant: University College

Application Called in – by Councillors – Wade, Wilkinson, Fooks and Gant for the following reasons – Effects on conservation area of continuing College expansion

RECOMMENDATION

APPLICATION BE APPROVED

For the following reasons:

- 1 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.
- 2 The Council considers that the proposal, subject to the conditions imposed, would accord with the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity.
- 3 Officers have considered carefully all objections to these proposals. Officers have come to the view, for the detailed reasons set out in the officers report, that the objections do not amount, individually or cumulatively, to a reason for refusal and that all the issues that have been raised have been adequately addressed and the relevant bodies consulted.

subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Materials as specified
- 4 Students - No cars
- 5 Cycle parking details required
- 6 Management controls
- 7 Out of term use
- 8 No link to student accommodation to rear

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 (OLP)

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP6 - Efficient Use of Land & Density

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

CP21 - Noise

HE7 - Conservation Areas

Core Strategy (OCS)

CS18_ - Urban design, town character, historic environment

CS25_ - Student accommodation

MP1 - Model Policy

Sites and Housing Plan (SHP)

HP5 - Location of Student Accommodation

HP9 - Design, Character and Context

HP15 - Residential cycle parking

HP16 - Residential car parking

Other Material Considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- This application site lies within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.
- Planning Practice Guidance
- Parking Standards, Transport Assessments and travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document Feb 2007

Relevant Site History:

89/00899/NFH - Change of use of ground and 1st floors from Residential to Doctors' Surgery. Minor alterations to doors and windows. Alterations to vehicular access and provision of 19 parking spaces (Scheme A). REF 20th October 1989.

89/00900/NFH - Change of use of ground and 1st floor from Residential to Doctors' Surgery. Minor alterations. PER 20th October 1989.

89/01089/LH - Conservation Area consent for demolition of garage. PER 10th January 1990.

01/00488/AH - Erection of two non-illuminated pole mounted signs (North Oxford Medical Centre). PER 19th May 2001.

13/02601/FUL - Change of use of ground and first floors from a Doctor's Surgery (use class D1) to residential (use class C3) in order to form 1 x 7-bedroom dwellinghouse (Additional information). PER 29th November 2013.

Representations Received:

Flats 1 & 2 100 Woodstock Road, 9 Staverton Road, Flats 2 & 3 100 Woodstock Road, Staverton Road, 28 Staverton Road, 2B Staverton Road, 151 Woodstock Road, 4 Rawlinson Road, 6 Rawlinson Road, 12 Rawlinson Road, 122 Woodstock Road, City Councillor for St Margaret's Ward, 14 Rawlinson Road, 93 Kingston Road, 10 Rawlinson Road, 11 Staverton Road, Flat 1 98 Woodstock Road, 24 Staverton Road, Councillor Ruth Williams, 1 Newlands Court, 1A Staverton Road, 14 Staverton Road, Flat 3, 1A Staverton Road, 167B Woodstock Road, Flat 3, Quinton House 98 Woodstock Road, Flat 4, 165 Woodstock Road, 167 Woodstock Road, 8 Rawlinson Road, 165 Woodstock Road, garden House, 98 Woodstock Road, Flat 2 98 Woodstock Road, 100 Woodstock Road,

Summary of comments

Original Plans

- the presence of a porter's lodge suggests something more imposing about the ultimate design for the building and site
- the site's relationship to 'the University College Campus' occurs without reference to UCC's long-range plan for the entire property
- objection is even stronger to the "bigger scheme" which University College is developing in this area—a scheme which is emerging through isolated planning applications and property deals in a somewhat underhand way
- it is clear that University College sees the Staverton Road / Woodstock Road / Banbury Road space as becoming large connected campus.
- object to the loss of character which will result from this change of use
- such a gate will need a pathway which necessitates lighting. Light and noise pollution would not be appropriate in this quiet family neighbourhood.
- one of many under-the-radar moves being made by University College, in furtherance of their property growth aims in North Oxford.
- The expansion of Univ's "campus" is destructive to the nature of residential North Oxford
- concerned to preserve the integrity of this neighbourhood as one predominantly for private residential use and to prevent the further expansion of colleges into what is already a threatened residential environment
- would do nothing to conserve or enhance the special nature of this area

- object to the proposal to include a Porters Lodge at the property as this is commercial development. This is completely inappropriate for a residential property, and in addition one of this limited size
- no possible justification for this (opening at rear) other than there being an anticipated significant increase in movement of people, as well as the introduction of delivery vehicles and vehicular traffic which would inevitably cause noise and disturbance to local residents, and danger to pedestrians and other road users on Woodstock Road.
- require University College to lay out its master plan for consideration
- the impact of increased traffic
- this proposal should not be seen in isolation from other developments that University College have already put in place for the immediate area
- prohibiting removal or significant lowering of existing trees
- not opposed student accommodation but the size and nature of this application
- impose strict controls on the number of parking spaces in front of the house
- it seems to me that an emended version of the application, in which no part is played by the formation of a gateway or path, might be acceptable
- provision would have to be introduced for a private garden for the use of resident's and their guests
- would result in the net loss of a "dwelling" or independent unit of accommodation

Amended Plans

- the college appears to believe their amended plans have quelled any opposition; this is clearly not the case
- all concerns raised previously still remain
- questions many have raised about University Colleges intention to establish a campus in North Oxford conspicuously absent and ignored by agent/applicant
- offer assurance that the Porters Lodge has been intentionally designed to be subservient to the main use as student accommodation
- the revised proposals, one might conclude, fall short of the clarity the author of the letter hopes for. Rather they offer pallid, conciliatory gestures and fail to engage with the concerns local residents have expressed about the unique features which characterize this part of North Oxford
- overlooks the fundamental concern expressed by local residents about the impact on this area of North Oxford of the piecemeal development of University Colleges campus

Statutory and Other Consultees:

Highways Authority: This application should be granted but the suitable conditions applied (see below)

The Victorian Group of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society: no objection to the planned alterations to this building, but we are seriously concerned about its implications; fear that it plans further building on what it likes to call its 'campus', and urge you to encourage it to come clean about its intentions; we are

worried about the prospect of this residential area becoming swamped by these two academic institutions (St Clare's and University College).

St Margaret's Area Society: better categorised as a HMO; The applicants' claim that their application is consistent with policy HP5 is nonsense. They are separated from the University College annexe by two large houses and the garden of 96 Woodstock Road is a long one, Apart from the provision of cycle racks, a condition should be inserted in any permission preventing the lighting of the path across the back garden at night, surely light pollution must be prevented altogether, and urbanisation should be resisted

Determining Issues:

- Change of Use/Loss of Health Care Facilities/Student Accommodation
- Appearance
- Car Parking
- Cycle Parking

Officers Assessment:

Site Description

1. The application site lies on the eastern side of Woodstock Road to the north of Rawlinson Road. The site comprises a detached three storey building part brick, part rendered under a tiled roof. The ground and first floors were given over to a doctor's surgery which has been established since 1989. The second floor was a flat which was accessed via the medical centre. The building is currently empty. The building is set back from the road and has parking to the front and a large area of lawn to the rear.

Proposal

2. The application is seeking permission for a change of use from a doctor's surgery to a nine bed student accommodation along with a porter's lodge on the ground floor. Some external works are proposed which include the introduction of a doorway at ground floor level to provide access into the entrance hall.
3. The original application as submitted also showed the introduction of a gateway in the rear boundary wall and a new access path to it to provide access to the University College campus at the rear. This element of the scheme has been removed.
4. There was a previous application to convert the doctor's surgery into a residential property (13/02601/FUL) which was submitted by Dr Robert Mather And Partners, not University College, and was approved.

Change of Use/Loss of Health Care Facilities/Student Accommodation

5. The loss of the doctor's surgery has already been established by the granting of planning permission 13/02601/FUL which was for a change of use to a 7 bedroom dwellinghouse.
6. Many of Oxford's existing GP practices occupy buildings that are not appropriate for modern healthcare. Problems include lack of space, poor access for people with disabilities, and poor quality or inflexible accommodation that limits the ability to develop or improve services. The Oxfordshire PCT and local authorities share a vision to redesign many health and social care facilities provided by the NHS and social services in Oxford, which will address these problems. This may include co-locating GPs, community social services, and some non-acute specialist health services, to provide more comprehensive facilities at neighbourhood level, and developing more integrated home and community-based services.
7. Current evidence suggests that existing GP practices and health centres have some additional capacity (preliminary spatial analysis of GP practice capacity (provided by Oxfordshire PCT) within the Oxford Core Strategy)
8. Planning permission was granted in May 2011 for accommodation to relocate the Jericho Health Centre to the former Radcliffe Infirmary site. This comprises three different surgeries in one building which are up and running.
9. The Woodstock Road surgery is no longer economically viable. The two ongoing partners are moving, one to the new Jericho Health Centre and the other to Summertown Health Centre. All of the practices serving north Oxford have capacity to take on new patients and are willing to do so. Patients are registering at a number of surgeries in the City, mainly based on where they live.
10. Given the type of building the surgery currently occupies and the other practices within the area the loss of the Woodstock Road surgery is considered acceptable.
11. Furthermore policy HP5 of the SHP sets out criteria for determining which locations are suitable for student accommodation, accessibility by public transport being an important consideration.
12. The policy states student accommodation will be granted planning permission in the following locations on or adjacent to an existing university or college academic site OR in the City Centre or a District Centre OR located adjacent to a main thoroughfare OR on a site which is allocated in the development plan to potentially include student accommodation. Appendix 3 of the SHP listed main thoroughfares of which Woodstock Road is one. Therefore the location is considered acceptable for student accommodation.
13. Policy HP5 goes on to state planning permission will only be granted for student accommodation if a management regime has been agreed with the

City Council that will be implemented on first occupation of the development. This is partially in place by the inclusion of a Porters Lodge. This is for the administration of the incoming residents of 96 Banbury Road where a member of staff will undertake the day to day running of the property as well as other college business. In the event of permission being granted a condition will be added to seek details of a management regime.

14. In addition policy CS25 of the OCS states student accommodation will be restricted in occupation to students in full-time education on courses of an academic year or more. This is the case with this application and a condition would be added to ensure this remains the case.
15. The existing University College siteto the rear of the application site this academic year has 296enrolled students accommodated, (a large building there being refurbished at the moment). With a large population present concern has been expressed that 96 Woodstock Road could be used as a second access to that development. However in the amended submission no link is proposed, meaning that students to the existing blocks of accommodation would be required to enter from the existing access from Staverton Road.A condition to the planning permission is suggested that no future link should be created without the consent of the local planning authority.
16. With this safeguard in place the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of the loss of the doctors surgery and as a location for student accommodation i.e. located on a main thoroughfare.

Appearance

17. Policy CS18 of the OCS states planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high quality urban design. This is reiterated in policies CP1of the OLP. Policy CP1 states that planning permission will only be granted for development that respects the character and appearance of the area and which uses materials of a quality appropriate to the nature of the development, the site and its surroundings.
18. The site lies within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Areawhere policy HE7 of the OLP applies. This states that planning permission will only be granted for development that preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the conservation areas or their settings.
19. There are minimal external changes to the building, the majority being internal. Externally the only alteration is the opening up of a previous doorway. The door is in the north elevation and will create the main entrance into the property. The proposed door is of a style that is in keeping with the building and is more logical point of entry than the current entrance to the south side of the building..
20. The proposed changes, although minimal are considered acceptable in terms of policy CS18 of the Core Strategy 2026 and CP1 and HE7 of the Oxford

Local Plan 2001-2016 in that they respect the character and appearance of the property and wider area. Materials of a quality appropriate to the site and its surroundings assist in creating an appropriate visual relationship with the wider conservation area. Moreover in terms of uses Woodstock Road along most of its length is residential in character with a sprinkling of other activities. In this case the replacement of a predominantly day time activity by a form of specialist residential accommodation would in the officers view be more sympathetic to the overall character of the conservation area and can be supported in those terms. As such it is concluded that the development would not compromise the special character and appearance of the conservation area in which it is located.

Car Parking

21. Policy CS25 of the OCS states appropriate management controls will be secured, including an undertaking that students do not bring cars to Oxford. Policy HP16 of the SHP states that only operational and disabled parking should be provided for new student accommodation. Operational parking should be available for students and their families, for a limited period, arriving and departing at the start and end of semesters or terms. A condition will be added to secure this. As a result of this application the number of cars on the site and visiting the site is likely to be significantly reduced when compared to the use as a doctors surgery.

Cycle Parking

22. Policy CS13 of the OCS states that planning permission will only be granted for development that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport. A fundamental part of encouraging cycling is the provision of secure cycle storage. High-quality cycle parking is especially important for student accommodation, as it is essentially car-free. The minimum standards for student accommodation reflect that more students are likely to cycle in Oxford if they live away from their place of study (whereas those within close proximity are likely to walk).
23. Policy HP15 of the SHP states planning permission will only be granted for residential development that complies with the following minimum cycle parking provision for student accommodation at least 3 spaces for every 4 study bedrooms. No cycle parking provision has been shown therefore a condition will be added to ensure it meets the requirements of the development plan.

Conclusion:

24. Committee is recommended to approve the application accordingly, subject to the conditions listed.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers:

Contact Officer: Lisa Green

Extension: 2614

Date: 27th August 2014

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