DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Anne McDonald.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/00996/FP	Single storey rear extension to frontage building, single storey link between the 2 buildings and single storey front and rear extensions to rear building. (Amended plans received 15/08/18).	Rosehill Hospital Hitchin Road Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3NA

Submitted Plan Nos

TS17-379Q 17034-06 17034-07 17034-08 17034-21C 17034-22B 17034-23C 17034-24C

1.0 Policies

LP55 Car Parking Standards

LP2	Green Belt
SECN13	Protecting Green Belt Land
XD3	Protecting Living Conditions
XSP10	Healthy Communities
XSP5	Countryside and Green Belt

2.0 Site History

2.1 There is an extensive planning history for this site recorded in Uniform, with no history directly relevant to this proposal.

3.0 Representations

3.1 The application was advertised with a site notice and individual neighbour notification letters were sent twice, at the beginning of the application and after amended plans were submitted. The local Cllrs were also emailed to inform them of the amended plans received. A response has been received from one of the neighbours positioned at the front of the site. The key issues raised include:

- concern that two way traffic past the driveway for this house will be dangerous as visibility is poor around this corner;
- people park badly on the site, and there is no monitoring of how people park and a two way system past this will make this situation even worse;
- the additional buildings remove the open space feel currently enjoyed in the area;
- the design of the extensions are not in keeping with the look and feel of the buildings in the area;
- the link building would be unsightly in such a beautiful area. The mix of modern design and older design often works well together but sadly this would be at great expense to the open look of the current site;
- concern that the building works would damage the TPO trees;
- the site is currently not managed to a high standard. The roadways are in a poor condition and anything to increase traffic flow through these areas without considerable improvements will make this site and situation worse. I would hope that any improvements or extensions to the site would necessitate a stipulation of adequate roads for traffic to pass over without hazard;

- the entranceway only has room for two cars at the very front end. At times of day when the traffic is busy on the main road traffic backs up into the site. This happens now without an increase of traffic to the site and this will only make this worse.

3.2 **Anglian Water** – recommends conditions.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The Rosehill Hospital site is positioned on the east side of Hitchin Road within the narrow Green Belt stretch separating Letchworth Garden City and Hitchin. The site is used as the Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living, offering a range of holistic, complementary and support groups and therapies from Pilates and yoga, to support and exercise groups for people with either degenerative diseases or mental health.

4.1.1 As existing, the site is formed from two buildings, one behind the other. The frontage building is traditional in style, and three storeys in height with dormer style windows at second floor level. The rear building is single storey with an existing lean-to style rear extensions. Within the central section of the site is a large grass lawn area, with many large and attractive trees, most of which have tree preservation order protection on them. There is an existing one way traffic circulation system with car parking mainly to the two sides of the site. There are photos in Anite.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 This a full planning application seeking permission for a single storey rear extension to the front building, a glazed link across the site connecting the front and rear buildings, with a single storey front extension to the rear building and single storey rear extension to the rear building. The plans show that traffic is to be two way round the site, as the central cross over within the site is to be built across and the car parking area on the east side is to be extended with an additional 12 spaces.

4.2.2 Rear extension to front building – this is 8m deep rear of the building and 17.2m wide. It has a flat roof and large glazed entrance doors on the north-west elevation, with large windows and the glazed link on the other three elevations. It is to provide a large central reception area, with disabled toilet facilities, two office areas, staff room and store area.

4.2.3 Glazed link – this is 2.3m wide and 23.5m long across the site with fully glazed elevations and a flat roof. It has been positioned so that it crosses the site in between the protected trees.

4.2.4 Front extension to rear building – this is 8m wide by 4.7m deep and has a traditional brick and ridged pitched roof appearance. This extension is to provide male, female and disabled toilet facilities for the rear block.

4.2.5 Rear extension to rear building – this is 7.2m deep by 19.2m wide. It partly replaces the existing lean-to extension which is to be demolished, and has been reduced in size so that the side flank of this extension is in line with the side flank wall of the rear building. This extension is to form two new classroom spaces and also has a flat roof with large sections of glazing.

4.2.6 In support of the application a DAS, a Strategic Aims Statement and an Arboriculture Report have been submitted.

4.2.7 DAS – this sets out the use of the site and the proposed extensions.

4.2.8 Strategic Aims – this sets out the aspirations of the Centre for Healthy Living. What services they provide and what they are hoping are achieve.

4.2.9 Arboriculture Report – this concludes that there are multiple fine category A and B trees, and that much of the development will take place within the canopy and root zones of these trees. Therefore, consideration must be given to suitable foundation build methods that will protect the tree roots.

4.3 **Key Issues**

Principle

4.3.1 Rosehill Hospital is located within the Green Belt, and therefore, Green Belt policy is the key policy consideration. Set out in the NPPF2, this states that new development within Green Belt is inappropriate development unless it complies with the allowed exceptions, set out within paragraph 145. Part (c) of this paragraph states: *'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additional over and above the size of the original building'*.

4.3.2 In this instance, the proposed extensions, based on my calculations, represent a 49% increase in the floorspace across the site. However, this is being ungenerous, as the glazed link is just a link, and does not provide usable classroom or treatment room type space and I have not included the front building third floor accommodation in the original floorspace, as no plans have been provided for this. Given that the proposed extensions are single storey, in my view, they do not add significant bulk and will not appear as disproportionate or unacceptable additions onto the building or within the site. On this basis, I consider that they comply with the provisions of part C of paragraph 142 of the NPPF2 and these works are appropriate exception development within the Green Belt.

Openness and negotiations

4.3.3 I have extensively negotiated this application and considered the impact of the glazed link on the openness of the site. In summary, the 'reception room' from the central section of the glazed link has been removed so this link is now fully glazed, which is to maintain the sense of space and openness within the central section of the site. Furthermore, the depth and width of the rear extension to the front building has been reduced so that is it set in from the two side flank walls. I consider that these reductions were needed to overcome the concern I initially had regarding the possible impact the works would have enclosing the site. However, as set out above, I now consider that the works, whilst linking the two buildings, will not have adverse impact on the context, setting or openness of the site.

Use

4.3.4 The site offers a healthy living centre to the local community. According to its website it runs over 80 classes a week including ballet, yoga, mindfulness, a choir and therapy treatment rooms. The extension allows for a new centralised reception area, new toilet facilities for the rear block, a new classroom space for the rear building and two new

treatment rooms and one new community / break out room in the front building. The glazed link is to allow disabled access across the site.

Design

4.3.5 I have no objection to the design approach taken for the extensions. The front extension to the rear building is traditional brick and tile with a ridged pitched roof. This is acceptable and appropriate as this extension will be seen set against the context of this older building.

4.3.6 The two rear extensions, both to the rear of the frontage building and to the rear of the rear building, have a more contemporary appearance, and are to be constructed with a flat roof, large windows, a sections of timber and stone cladding around the reception area entrance, which is the extension to the front building. In my view, this is acceptable. These extensions can be regarded to be contemporary style additions onto the buildings, which are to be seen next to, and complimentary to, the original buildings, and believe that this design approach works in this instance and location. I consider this to be an 'honest' form of extension, as the parts forming the extension are light weight style additions the building, and not to form / become over time an integral part of the older style of buildings. If, in years to come, these extension are no longer needed, they could relatively easily be removed from the host buildings, without causing any significant damage to them. Furthermore, being rear extensions, the extensions are not within the main views when entering the site from the front, and the rear extension to the rear building will be screened in most views, apart from in small views from the end section of the visitor car park. Whilst the rear extension to the frontage building and the glass link across the site will be visible in views when within the site, the existing trees will provide a high degree of setting and continuous context to the site, and no objection is raised to the design.

4.3.7 The largest extension is the rear extension to the front building as the depth of the extension is the same as the depth of the original building. However, given its flat roofed and contemporary form, I have no objection to this part of the extension which is set against the bulk of the frontage building.

4.3.8 The rear extension to the rear building has also been negotiated so that this has been set in in line with the side flank wall of this building. It partly replaces an existing lean to room and partly is new extension. I have no objection to this extension in this location, which is at the rear of the site, and will not have harm on the context, setting or openness of the site.

Trees

4.3.9 The trees in the central section of the site are a key and attractive feature of the site. The plans show that these trees are to be retained, and another reason for the lightweight design is to allow foundation methods that will not harm the root system of the trees. On this basis I have no objection to the design approach or the impact the link extension will have. As these foundation details are lacking in this application, a condition is recommended on this basis.

4.3.10 The visitor car park is to be extended to the east with a new row of 12 spaces. A small section of grass and scrub like trees are to be removed to allow this. I have no objection to this and a condition is recommended requiring replacement planting.

Parking

4.3.11 As existing on site there are areas for parking. This is generally quite informally laid out and therefore does not use the space on site to its maximum. I contacted the applicant who set out the following regarding parking demand on site:

4.3.12 *At any given time*

- *a maximum of 3 classes are run. Each class has an average of 12 people – total 36 people*
- *a maximum of 11 treatments can be offered*
- *total client numbers 47*

Daily totals

- *An average of 15 classes/groups are run each day (where days extend from 9am to 10pm)*
- *An average of 35 one to one treatment sessions are provided each day (between 8am and 8:30pm)*

At peak times (Tuesday evenings, Mondays at 2pm when our choir meets) we are close to capacity, but we are actively pursuing a reduction in the number of cars through encouraging other modes of transport and introducing car sharing initiatives.

4.3.13 Following the works, the number of classrooms on site are to be increased by one and the number of treatment rooms is to be increased by two. Based on the above, this can be considered to represent an additional 14 people, taking the 'at any given time' figure to 61. Layout plan 24C show 56 spaces in the visitor car park, plus an additional 6 disabled spaces and 1 further space next to the front block, which is a total of 63 spaces for visitors and a further 20 spaces for staff. Further spaces on site were proposed within the lawn area at the frontage of the site, but given that this a Green Belt location, I considered it was more important to delete these frontage spaces from the scheme and protect the setting and openness of the site when entering it from the main road.

4.3.14 With regards to parking, in my view, this provision of spaces is an acceptable amount to meet the parking demands on site as set out by the applicant. Given the location of the site outside of the town, in the event that classes are so popular there is insufficient parking on site that those wishing to attend cannot park and then miss their class / group, this will in turn self regulate the parking demand on the site. As the plans do not state the proposed surface treatment of the car park or how the spaces are to be laid out to make best use of the space and to stop cars from parking in such a way that partly blocks adjoining spaces, a condition is recommended to clarify this issue. In my view, the surface treatment should still be complementary to the Green Belt setting, such as gravel or grasscrete and the laying out of spaces also needs to be done in such a way that is sympathetic to the area. On this basis, I raise no objection on the basis of car parking.

4.3.15 I note that the circulation system around the site is to change as the site will no longer be one way as the open way route will be blocked by the front extension to the rear block. I have no objection to this and it will be down to individual drivers to take car when driving round.

Neighbour concerns

4.3.16 I note that the neighbour at The Annex is concerned that the two way traffic system is dangerous as visibility is poor, and currently people park next to his fence, blocking the way round. The plans show that the circulation route is to be laid out and it is down to the site to ensure that this is managed properly and that people do not park where they

should not. Whilst I have a degree of sympathy to this concern, I do not consider that this objection warrants the refusal of this application for this reason.

4.3.17 I also note his concern that at busy times a queue forms of people wishing to exit the site. Again, whilst I have a degree of sympathy, I consider that this is an issue outside the control of this application.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 No objection to the proposed extensions, which are considered to fall within acceptable exceptions for extensions allowed within the Green Belt by the provisions within the NPPF2. The glazed link through the site has been sensitively design to not harm the trees, which will still give the central section of the site an attractive setting and appearance. The car park extension will meet the parking needs for the site. The application is considered to comply with the necessary provisions of the existing and emerging local plan and with NPPF2 and is therefore recommended for conditional permission.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

   Reason:To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

   Reason:To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

4. Before works commence on site, the foundation method to be used which must protect the roots of the trees on site, is to be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and only the agreed foundation method can be used on site.

   Reason - to ensure minimal damage to the protected tree's root systems.

5. None of the trees to be retained on the application site shall be felled, lopped, topped, uprooted, removed or otherwise destroyed or killed without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

6. Before the commencement of any other works on the site, trees to be retained shall be protected by the erection of temporary chestnut paling or chain link fencing of a minimum height of 1.2 metres on a scaffolding framework, located at the appropriate minimum distance from the tree trunk in accordance with Section 4.6 of BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations, unless in any particular case the Local Planning Authority agrees to dispense with this requirement. The fencing shall be maintained intact for the duration of all engineering and building works. No building materials shall be stacked or mixed within 10 metres of the tree. No fires shall be lit where flames could extend to within 5 metres of the foliage, and no notices shall be attached to trees.

Reason:To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

7. As some trees / scrub are to be removed to allow the car park extension, replacement trees / shrubs must be planted around the edge of the 56 space visitor car park in the first planting season following the completion of the car park works.

Reason - to ensure the visual amenity of the site in this Green Belt location.

8. Details of the car park surface and space laying out method for the 56 space visitor car park and 13 space staff car park are to be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority, before any works to the car park commence and only the agreed details can be implemented on site. This surface treatment must be sympathetic to this Green Belt site location.

Reason - to prevent large sections of tarmac being introduced on this site.

9. No development shall commence until a foul water strategy has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The works must be implemented on site before the first use of the extension hereby approved and the works must be carried out in
accordance with the foul water strategy so approved unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To prevent environmental and amenity problems arising from flooding

10. No drainage works shall commence until a surface water management strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No hard-standing areas to be constructed until the works have been carried out in accordance with the surface water strategy so approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To prevent environmental and amenity problems arising from flooding.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Informative/s:

1. An application to discharge trade effluent must be made to Anglian Water and must have been obtained before any discharge of trade effluent can be made to the public sewer.

2. Anglian Water recommends that petrol / oil interceptors be fitted in all car parking/washing/repair facilities. Failure to enforce the effective use of such facilities could result in pollution of the local watercourse and may constitute an offence.

3. Anglian Water also recommends the installation of a properly maintained fat traps on all catering establishments. Failure to do so may result in this and other properties suffering blocked drains, sewage flooding and consequential environmental and amenity impact and may also constitute an offence under section 111 of the Water Industry Act 1991."

Signed  Tom Rea Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 27 September 2018	