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N.H.D.C.
15 MAY 2018

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

to accompany application under Town & Country Planning dated 14th May 2018 at The Surgery, Station Road, Knebworth, Hertfordshire SG3 6AP

The Proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of eight single bedroom flats with parking in the event of the re-location of the existing surgery.

Background

The existing building dates from the late nineteenth century and was a single dwelling. By the mid twentieth century it had been converted and extended to form five flats and the site asphalted as a large car park. During the latter part of the twentieth century the property was extended further to form a medical surgery. By the current century the surgery has become inadequate for a growing practice and is presently looking to re-locate.

Justification

The terms of the lease as a medical surgery expired in 2012-13. A new lease for a term of three years was offered to the practice but terms could not be agreed and currently the practice remains in occupation of the property by virtue of a statutory continuation of the lease. The practice may give notice of termination of the lease and re-locate within the village of Knebworth at any time. This would leave the applicant to this application with a building designed and laid out as a doctor's surgery with no alternative tenant as no other medical practice would be permitted to operate while the current practice serves the village. In these circumstances the applicant is anxious to avoid the possibility of a vacant boarded up building, subject to vandalism, in a very prominent village location. As the planning process can be a lengthy one it is felt prudent to have a planning permission in place that can be readily implemented. We would emphasise that there is no intention on the part of the applicant to bring pressure on the medical surgery to vacate the premises.

The Site

The site is currently occupied by a medical surgery which covers a substantial area with the remaining area totally asphalted to provide a car park. It is a corner site with a slight fall to the south of around 0.75m.

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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (2)

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Accommodation

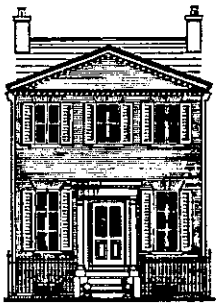
Consideration has been given to the nature of the proposal in relation to the size of the residential units. The urban nature of the site and its juxtaposition to two heavily used roads we feel negates family occupation. The single bedroom units would be more appropriate and suitable to likely residents using the rail facilities immediate to the site. There is an additional benefit from the reduction in vehicular activity generated by low occupancy dwellings.

Design

The proposed residential development is of a traditional design with a similar footprint to the existing building. The height and massing of the proposal aligns with the adjoining properties in Station Road and Stevenage Road. Ridge height will be a little lower than the surrounding properties with a similar pitch. Consideration has been given to the arrangement of windows and the proportion of windows within the walls. All the elevations have been given a degree of articulation to provide interest to all four sides.

Materials

The majority of the walls would be of soft red stock brickwork which would suitably blend with the brick of the surrounding buildings. There are areas of smooth colour-washed render at first floor level. The windows would have flat cut brick arches. A stone band will delineate storey level and reduce visual areas of brick. The roof would be of plain brown clay tiles. The dormers would be lead clad with lead cheeks and skylights would be of low profile conservation design. A single entrance porch with brick piers will provide a prominent yet low key entrance to the building. A boarded arched feature is included to the west elevation to provide interest where a window would be inappropriate.



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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (3)

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Landscaping

The re-arrangement of parking within the site will allow for areas of soft landscaping around the buildings and around the site itself. The existing fence facing the highway would be retained and backed with new hedge planting which could be located along three of the boundaries. There are areas where medium sized tree planting can be provided.

Parking

Presently fourteen cars are accommodated within the site. Several of these spaces are inadequate and through access is difficult. There is constant traffic movement throughout the day. The proposed parking would be one space for each of the one bedroom flats with additionally two visitor parking spaces. Traffic movements would be greatly reduced as the occupants of the flats are likely to use the local train service facilities with cars moving little during the working week. A simple access will be provided using the existing exit onto London Road.

Waste Management

A location to the north of the site which can be discreetly screened with brick walls can provide a substantial area for communal bins for both refuse and re-cycling. The area proposed would be 3.6m x 2.0m and is adjacent to the highway. If required this area could be extended.

Access

There will be level and comfortable disabled access into the building and around the ground floor. Shallow stairs will comply for limited disabled access to the upper floors. A bicycle shed is located to the north of the site. Extensive facilities are immediate to the site including a rail station.

Acoustics

The application is accompanied by an Acoustics Report.