

Application No: 11/3551N

Location: Former Medical Centre, BEAM STREET, NANTWICH, CW5 5NX

Proposal: Conservation Area Consent for Demolition of Former Kiltearn Medical Centre and Construction of Retail Unit with Car Parking, Servicing, Landscaping and all Associated Works

Applicant: Mr S Binks, Keyworker Homes (Cheshire) LLP

Expiry Date: 10-Nov-2011

## **ERRATUM**

**Address** – A number of residents have pointed out that the former medical centre to which this application relates was not known as “Church View”. Therefore, the address has been amended to read “Former Medical Centre, Beam St.” to avoid any confusion.

**Floor Area** – The total floor area of the building is 1394sq.m., of which 930sq.m is retail space and 404sq.m is offices and storage at mezzanine level.

**Car Parking** – Contrary to the figures stated in the report, 22 parking spaces are proposed on the site. This is the same number which were previously on site to serve the former medical centre.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

### **Civic Society**

- We still cannot support this revision.
- We were disappointed to have to conclude that the revised elevations are no better than the first.
- Although the the random coloured black, white and green cladding panels have been lost, the new elevations still do not "hang together" as an overall, satisfying building.
- There is no sense of unity in the building - it is an assembly of sub-units, with different sizes and with differing external treatments, fitted together onto the site.
- Whilst we see that this might be a way of reducing the mass of one large shed, the new approach is still not the successful design that it must be here.

- It gives the impression of a random assembly of various shaped "boxes" with an unnecessarily high frontage elevation to Beam Street - the mono pitch at the front, makes the impact worse.
- We realise that there has been an attempt to put some more brickwork on the elevation, but the vertical emphasis of the columns surrounding large areas of sheeting, just does not work in visual terms.
- The roof materials are not fitting for a Conservation Area - the Morrisons building, on the other side of town, had to have roof slates/tiles , but this proposal has metal sheeting. Despite the pitches being shallower, there need to be some better materials used.
- Neither does it fit in with the Conservation Area, in which it would sit. Although recent buildings have not been of the high Conservation Area standard that we think should be required, past buildings' weaknesses should not be seen as a precedent for another poor design.
- We are at a loss to say why the applicants cannot devise a better building.
- We would like to ask if the application has been or could be referred to Places Matter! – the North West Design Review Panel ?
- The site is worthy of such careful consideration and certainly the difficulty of deciding on the right design for this prominent site warrants it.
- We note also that there has been a revision to the internal HGV turning arc - but it still does not overcome the inevitable problems of HGVs driving to the back of the site past the new Health Centre via a right angle bend where lots of vehicles already have difficulty due to parked disabled pass cars, ambulances etc.
- Also noted was the inclusion on the elevations of the "M&S" logo.
- Unless they are definitely the occupants, this element should be removed because it misleads the public. Planning Permission will not be for a specific retail operator; it could be any number of retail firms once on the open market - so why do the submitted plans show "M&S"?
- Trees - they still will all be lost, as far as we can ascertain from the website plans. As such, we are still worried that the wholesale clearance of established tree cover in the prominent streetscene of this Conservation Area, would create a stark corner allowing clear views of the new Health Centre too. At least the current tree cover helps to hide this from view. More effort needs to be made to keep the trees - as would be required of many a small business or private householder in a conservation area.
- The external hard surfaces still do not give enough of a high standard that will work functionally as well as aesthetically.
- If the Council does accept our suggestions for the matter to go to the Design Review Panel, we would be pleased to help and/or attend, if

this is normal practice, or attend any meetings with planning officers and applicants.

- The site is one which justifies very careful and painstaking planning consideration, because Nantwich Conservation Area is one of the finest in Cheshire East and the whole region.

## **OFFICER COMMENT**

### **Design**

Whilst the comments of the Civic Society are noted, officers disagree with the comment that the building lacks unity and appears as an assembly of sub-units. This approach has been deliberately taken, in order to break down the massing of the building. The attempt to introduce brickwork and vertical emphasis, has also, in the opinion of officers, been successful.

With regard to the choice of roof materials, due to the shallow pitch, slate/tiles would not be functionally suitable and would not be visible from ground level. Furthermore, if the pitch were increased to accept a slate, this would increase the overall height of the building, which is another point of concern for the Civic Society. Parallels are drawn with the Morrison's building. However, this is in a more sensitive location, closer to the heart of the conservation area. Notwithstanding this point, officers will ensure through conditions that the choice of metal cladding is an appropriate slate grey colour to tone with the buildings surroundings.

As stated in the main report, whilst the building would not be suitable in the heart of the conservation area, it is considered to be appropriate in this peripheral location, having regard to the character of the large modern public buildings, and modern residential development that surrounding it.

Officers can confirm that the original scheme has been referred to Places Matter! – the North West Design Review Panel. The revised proposal has been largely based on the comments made by panel members at that meeting.

With regard to the comments about HGV turning, in the absence of any objection from the Strategic Highways Manager, it is not considered that a refusal on highway safety grounds could be sustained

M&S signage is shown on the building as the store has now entered into a contract and confirmed that they are intending to occupy the building. Whilst signage will require the submission and approval of a separate advertisement consent application, by showing the signs on the plans at this stage, it demonstrates that their locations has been considered from the outset as part of the design process and that they will not be subsequently appear as an afterthought. The Civic Society are correct, however that the building will not be limited to the use of M&S and therefore Members should be mindful when determining the application, that this is an open A1 retail consent and could

be occupied by any retailer. They should make their decision on the acceptability of the proposed land use rather than that of a particular retailer.

The trees on the southern boundary will be retained. Therefore the Civic Society is incorrect instating that all the trees will be cleared. The trees to be removed are not protected under a TPO, and in the absence of any objection from the Landscape Officer, who has confirmed that the trees are of poor quality, a refusal on tree grounds could not be sustained. Furthermore, replacement planting on both the western boundary and the public square are proposed.

The quality of materials to be used external hard surfaces can be controlled by condition.

Therefore whilst the Civic Society comments are noted, it remains officers view that the design is acceptable and complies with the relevant local plan policies.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**As per main report**