

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATION SHEET

PLANNING APPLICATION.

APPLICATION No. 153301

Officer DANIEL RAY

Parish SONNING.

Proposal FULL APPLICATION FOR THE AMNEDMENT TO PLANNING PERMISSION F/2014/2196 TO APPROVE SPORTS AND PYSIOTHERAPY CLINIC BUILDING INVOLVING REORIENTATION, REDESIGN, IMPROVED LANDSCAPING AND PARKING PROVISION.

Address PAVILION, HOLME PARK SPORTS GROUND

Applicant MR JOHN FISHER

This application follows several previous applications, which were for the approval of a sports and physiotherapy centre, the principle of which was established at the 2008 appeal. When allowing the appeal the Inspector agreed (Reasons 8) that the proposal did not accord with policy CP11 and that none of the exceptions referred to in the policy applied to the case. However, in the Inspector's view (Reasons 9) the proposal was relatively modest in terms of its size and its impact on its surroundings and also referred to PPS 4 (Reasons 10) saying that, in rural areas, local planning authorities should support the **conversion and re-use** of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside. Further the Inspector (Reason 11) was of the view that it would be **easily accessible** for some **residents of Sonning and locals living elsewhere** and (Reason 14) the use would in part benefit those **suffering sports injuries whilst playing for the various local Sports Clubs or the School located in the vicinity of the site**. In Reason 17 the Inspector noted that there were no other sports and physiotherapy clinics in the area and 'I would anticipate that some of the users of the facilities **would live relatively locally**'. In Reason 18 the Inspector concluded that '**re-use of the building clearly does not harm the separate identity of settlements, it already exists**' and that this outweighed the harm that arises from non-compliance of CP11'. In Reason 19 the Inspector referred to car parking and said that the anticipated movements to and from the site 'would be lost in the day to day fluctuations of vehicles through the aforementioned junction'.

In short the Inspector identified *local use* (Reasons 11, 14, 17), that the proposal was '*relatively modest*' Reason 9), that '*PPS 4 supported the re-use of suitably constructed existing buildings*' in the countryside (Reason 10) and that there were '*no other sports and physiotherapy clinics in the area*'.

When appraising application F/2014/2196, in his Officer Report the officer referred to the Inspectors reasoning at the appeal and relied heavily on this reasoning when deciding the application to demolish and rebuild the existing building. The proposal F/2014/2196 is similar in size and layout to that allowed at the appeal, and, importantly, the roof height was to be

reduced to 2.7 metres. Sonning Parish Council were of the view that this made the demolition and rebuilding acceptable, providing the appeal conditions were applied to the proposal.

The latest proposal is significantly different from that considered by the Inspector or that approved in F/2014/2196. There is a change of use, the introduction of a hyperbaric chamber, the building is to be reoriented, there is a significant change in the position and size of the car parking area, the height of the building to be raised to 4.1 metres across its whole length whereas the current permission is for a roof height of 2.7 metres, and the proposal would significantly affect the amenity presently enjoyed by the residents in the Bungalow. The Parish Council therefore wish to strongly object to the application and believe that the proposal should be considered as a new, separate planning application rather than an amendment.

The Parish Council therefore objects to the proposal, for the above, and the following reasons:

- When allowing the appeal the Inspector identified a *local use* but the current application states that the proposal will result in a *local and national hub*. This is significantly different to anything previously proposed or visualised and represents overuse of the site.
- There are other hyperbaric facilities locally (just off the Oxford Road in Reading) and another at the Reading University campus (but the Council understands that this one may have been closed). The applicant states that it has “*proved difficult to secure a tenant*” despite statement at the appeal that “*many patients would come from the nearby education and sports establishments*”. The Parish Council ask why this new speculative proposal will succeed in securing a tenant where the previous proposal failed. The rationale for the proposal on this site is therefore questionable and the Parish Council has doubts about how much the hyperbaric centre would serve the local community.
- Sports injuries/physiotherapy are not included in the list of issues that would benefit from hyperbaric treatment so it is difficult to understand how the use of hyperbaric chamber relates to the sports and physiotherapy clinic.
- The appeal decision and approval F/2014/2196 stated that the “*premises shall be used as a sports and physiotherapy clinic only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class D1)*”. The current proposal is a far more ambitious project than envisaged at the appeal or when considering the 2014 application.
- The Parish Council have concerns about the safety of the hyperbaric chamber, both for the patient and others in the building and about the potential fire risk due to the oxygen-rich environment of the chamber. There are also rooms within the central core of the building which do not have easy access to escape routes. This is also of concern given the proximity of the proposal to the Bungalow, the nurse school and rugby football pitch. It is therefore contrary to CP3 (a) and (b). The current proposal is also contrary to CP11 (2), which states that the development should **not** “*lead to the excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from original buildings*” and (3), “*it is suitably located within located buildings, which are appropriate for conversion or in the case of new buildings would bring about **environmental improvements***”.
- The same concerns apply to the storage of the oxygen tanks.
- The Parish Council is also concerned about the noise and disturbance likely to be generated by the hyperbaric chamber.

- Together with the increase in parking spaces (from 20 to 27), increased vehicle movements and the revised layout of the car park the proposal is a much more urban proposal than that being considered at the appeal or under F/2014/2196. This now covers a much larger area, is more built up with shed like structures for bicycles and refuse, and is positioned immediately behind the Bungalow which will impact on the quiet enjoyment, privacy and amenity, currently enjoyed by the occupants of the Bungalow.
- There is also concern about the lighting which will be required in the car park, both to illuminate the area and to provide security. Given the proposed car park would cover a much wider area than in the previous applications this would have even more impact on the occupants of the Bungalow.
- The 2014 permission stated that WBC had regard for the ‘special circumstances of the case (the benefits of the use to the community outweigh the harm caused by the proposal)’ and continued to say that WBC wanted to have the opportunity of exercising control over any subsequent alternative use. The Parish Council considers that the current proposal is so significantly different to that referred to in the appeal decision or in F/2014/2196 that the special circumstances no longer apply and cannot be used in relation to the current application and this now requires a full planning application rather than a revised proposal.

For all the above reasons Sonning Parish Council urges refusal of the application.

L. A. Bates (Clerk to the Council).

27 January 2016

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