PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL : Removal of two conservatories and their replacement with two extensions, and erection of link extension.
ADDRESS : John Munroe Independent Hospital, Rudyard, Leek, ST13 8RU
APPLICANT : John Munroe Hospital Group Limited
DATE : November 2019 JOB No. : 2019-2450

INTRODUCTION

The application

The application seeks permission for minor additions to the John Munroe Hospital. The use falls within the C2 use under the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order (Residential Institutions). This use class includes use for the "provision of residential accommodation and care for people in need of care" and "use as a hospital or nursing home". The application proposes a single storey extension on the East facing end elevation of the main hospital building. The proposal is to provide a more comfortable and better managed area of day rooms for residents. Consequently, it is proposed to remove two conservatories and replace them on the same footprints (with small departures), and the erection of a further extension between them to provide a link. All extensions will be single storey and constructed of coursed natural stone with a flat roof incorporating lantern lights.

The application building and its setting.

The application building is located within a hospital site that provides residential care and rehabilitation for patients with mental illness or challenging behaviour. The hospital buildings are set within landscaped grounds measuring about 2 hectares.

The application building was originally a large dwelling which obtained planning permission in 1987 to change use to a residential home for the elderly. Since then it has received planning permission for a limited number of additions, the conservatories that are the subject of this application being one of them. The Permission for the conservatories was granted in 2000 under reference 00/00390/FUL.

PLANNING HISTORY

As stated above, the hospital building was initially a large dwelling in landscaped grounds. It was granted planning permission in 1987 to use as a Home (Use Class C2). The Council's planning website shows planning permissions for extensions in 1988, 1999, 2000 (the conservatories) and 2004.

PLANNING POLICY

The application site is located in an area of open countryside that has been included in the North Staffordshire Green Belt. The proposal must therefore be judged against the rural policies of the **Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy** and the guidance contained in the recently revised National Planning Policy Framework.

The Core Strategy rural policies are contained in section 8.8. These are aimed at the maintenance and promotion of the rural area for sustainable development. **Policy R1** requires all proposals in the rural areas to be assessed according to the extent to which they enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promote the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitate economic activity, meet a rural community need and sustain the historic environment. Where proposals are considered to represent appropriate development, they should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of its scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other

effects such as noise and pollution. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.
At the heart of the **National Planning Policy Framework** is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Green Belt Section of the Framework states that the "fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence". Paragraph 145 states that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. It then sets out a range of building proposals that it sees as exceptions to this restrictive policy. Two exceptions are relevant to this proposal. Exception (c) permits the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Exception (g) permits the limited infilling …. of previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

EVALUATION
The principal planning issues raised by the proposal relate to the relationship between the proposal and Green Belt and rural areas policy.
In relation to the revised NPPF, the proposal is considered to represent an addition that is proportionate to the existing building. The proposed conservatory replacements are generally of the same scale as the buildings they are replacing. The "link" extension would clearly not impact on the openness of the Green Belt as it is within the "cheeks" of the conservatory replacements. The proposed extensions bring the dayroom facilities together and relocate the Nurse Station is a more strategic location. The proposal therefore aids the safety and management of hospital residents. The proposal is modest in size. On this basis, the proposal is considered to represent an exception under category (c).
In addition to this, the site is considered to represent "previously developed land". Accordingly, Green Belt policy allows infill projects provided that they do not result in a greater impact on the Green Belt than is the case without it. This previously developed site contains a number of buildings scattered about the grounds of the hospital- there is the principal hospital building (the application building) and former dwellings that now form part of the hospital (The Larches and High Ash), the covered reservoir and various ancillary buildings. These buildings clearly have a level of impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The modest scale of the proposal and its discrete location is considered to not increase that level of impact. In both respects, therefore, the proposal is considered to meet the Green Belt policy of the Framework.
In terms of the Core Strategy, the proposal does not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area and does not impact on sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest.
On this basis it is considered that the proposal will not harm the Green Belt nor harm the character of the countryside.
In terms of sustainability, whilst the site is away from towns and villages, it is an integral part of the applicant's hospital site. Servicing the application building will not generate additional traffic as this will be shared with the main site.

DESIGN AND ACCESS MATTERS
Use
The application proposal does not impact on the building and site's use as a C2 use.
Amount
The proposal will provide an additional 91 sq.m. of floorspace.
Layout
The proposed extension is located around the hospital residents' dayrooms where greater comfort and safety will be available.
Scale

The scale of the proposal reflects the scale of the existing dwelling.

Landscaping

The site is well landscaped. It is not considered that the proposed use generates a need for additional landscaping.

Appearance

The design and character of the existing building will not be materially affected.

Access

The site fronts the most used road linking Leek with Biddulph. The Baker service 423 runs buses between Leek and Biddulph Mow Cop past the property nine times a day (Mon-Fri) (10.35, 12.55, 14.35, 16.45 from Leek and 08.37, 10.07, 11.50, 14.10, 16.15 to Leek).