

Planning, Design & Access Statement

Application	Knebworth Library Redevelopment	Project No	0257
Client	General Practice Investment Corporation Limited	Date Issued	26.08.15

1.0 Introduction

This design and access statement has been produced in support of a full planning application for the proposed demolition of the existing Knebworth Library and the replacement with a combined development to provide replacement Library, Pharmacy, Doctors Surgery and three residential units. The proposals have been designed to support the continued and improved delivery of care to the current and future patient population of the Knebworth Medical Practice, enhancing the service being available to patients on the one site, and a new library facility for the population of Knebworth. The development is being undertaken on behalf of the Practice and Hertfordshire Country Council by their appointed third party developer General Practice Investment Corporation Ltd (GPI), a specialist primary care centre and community facility developer.

After undertaking an extensive site search within the locality and following discussions with both the practice, NHS England South East Midlands (formally NHS Hertfordshire) & discussions with Hertfordshire Country Council Estate team it was decided that the redevelopment of the Knebworth Library site represented the most viable option for development and improvement of these much needed community facilities. The proposed development would allow the practice and library to remain at the heart of their catchment area and is deliverable within the timescales of both the practice, NHS England (South East Midlands) and HCC Libraries service.

The applicant has undertaken pre-application consultation with the local authority and this application takes into consideration the issues raised within the meetings.

In particular the applicant has addressed the following items:

Relationship to neighbouring properties – The applicant has undertaken a full measured site survey to assess the existing and proposed levels and a full daylight sunlight study in line with BRE guidance to ensure the proposals will not have unacceptable impact on the adjacent residential houses.



Car parking provision – The applicant has commissioned a transport statement and travel plan for the development to justify the level of parking provided. These form part of this application and supports the proposal to provide 24 car parking spaces at the development. The planning statement has been prepared in consultation with the practice and library and has assessed both current and future travel patterns. The applicant is also submitting a travel plan as part of the application which makes recommendations for the future management of transport to the surgery and encourages sustainable (non-car) forms of transport for both patients and staff.

In addition there is also easy access to the nearby public car park on St Martins Road which has 30 spaces.

2.0 Applicant Requirements

2.1 Surgery Provision

The driving forces behind the proposals are the difficulties currently experienced by the practice which stem from a fundamental lack of space, accommodation which is not fit for purpose, an existing layout that can no longer be enhanced or changed and car parking which is not clearly marked or arranged - a hazard that cannot be addressed within the current confines of the site. The current premises in Station Road were constructed in the late 19th century and last refurbished / extended in the early 1980's and is formed of a two storey building accommodating consultation and administration areas.

When the premises were developed they were designed to support the patient list of circa 5400 patients, this list has grown steadily since and the practice now serve in excess of 7000 patients from the premises. Despite minor works to the premises, the existing building is simply not able to provide sufficient accommodation; to a suitable standard, to support the practices patient needs.

The existing premises also struggle to comply with the current NHS guidance on premises performance. The premises suffer from a range of issues including but not limited to, Health & Safety, limited Disabled Discrimination Act (DDA) / Equalities Act 2011 compliance and patient confidentiality concerns in particular at reception.

The practice provides an extensive range of general medical and enhanced services from the premises for their patient population and these could be significantly enhanced and improved through the provision of additional and suitable accommodation for the delivery of modern primary care services.



2.2 Library Provision

The replacement of the Library facility has been developed with and supported by HCC Libraries Service and designed in line with their requirements.

2.3 Residential Provision

The 3 flats included within the proposal will assist in the delivery of the Stevenage Borough Council's housing targets as set out in the Draft Local Plan 2016 whilst also ensuring that the proposal is viable for the delivery of the much needed improved provision of community services for Knebworth and the wider locality.

3.0 Site History, Use & Amount

Existing & Proposed Library Site

The current Library was built in the late 1970's and has a current footprint of approx. 331sqm Gross External Area (GIA) on a site of 1489sqm. This provides 177.m of public accommodation in the Library.

The site has 15 car parking spaces available for patients and staff; however, the current layout of the car park means that a number of these spaces do not conform to current standards in relation to size and layout.

Existing Surgery Site

The current D1 surgery was built in the late 19th Century as a residential house and converted and refurbished in the early 1980's. It has a current footprint of approx. 200sqm Gross External Area (GIA) on a site of 753sqm. Currently there are a total of 7 consulting rooms (combination of GP, nurse and treatment/phlebotomy room's) with ancillary office and patient areas; this volume of clinical space is now insufficient for the patient and practice needs.

The site has 13 car parking spaces available for patients and staff; however, the current layout of the car park means that a number of these spaces do not conform to current standards in relation to size and layout.

Proposed Surgery Accommodation



The proposal is to move the surgery to accommodate an agreed schedule of additional accommodation will allow the improved provision of services for the current patient list and allow an element of future expansion and flexibility; this will deliver a long term sustainable solution for the patients and practice.

The proposed development will provide 534 sqm. of surgery accommodation.

Library Accommodation

The reprovod accommodation for the Library has been designed in consultation with the Library service to provide the amount of accommodation required to the continued modern provision of Library services in the locality.

The proposed development will provide 221 sq.m .of Library accommodation.

Residential Accommodation

The scheme will provide three two bedroom residential units on the second floor. These have been designed to provide a good standard of accommodation in line with the Mayor of London Housing Design Guide.

4.0 Scale

The existing building is a flat roofed single storey building. The proposed building will be two and a half storeys to provide the accommodation required on the site with the top floor of residential accommodation set within the roof structure.

St Martins Road is characterised by two storey houses with pitched tile roofs. The proposal, whilst increased in scale to those adjacent has been designed with the residential amenity in mind and a daylight / sunlight study has been completed to demonstrate this.

5.0 Layout

The new building will be forward of the existing library building but will pull the rear and side elevation away from the boundary to west and north immediately adjacent to Gordon Court. Pedestrian access from the street will still be from the pavement on St Martins Road with access via a new ramp and steps.



The vehicle access will be moved towards No 9. This has been proposed in order to maximise the area available for the development.

The parking will be moved to the rear of the site together with the bin store and cycle storage. Pedestrian access will be along the western boundary of the site connecting back into the entrance ramp to the front. Cycle parking is provide adjacent to residential core.

The Library, Surgery and Pharmacy are all accessed from the front of the site and additional cycle racks are provided in this area.

The entrance to the residential flats is at the rear of the building with access along the side of the building and from the car park. Internally the flats are accessed by a stairway which also will be used by the Surgery as a secondary means of escape (the door will be alarmed and will fail open only in event of a fire).

The layout of the flats is a standard modern arrangement with accommodation leading from a main hall and a combined living, kitchen and dining area. All flats have a private terrace of approximately 8sqm. accessed from the main living area.

Internally the Library and Pharmacy are both on the ground floor only with the library having a fire exit and staff entrance to the rear. The pharmacy is accessed and serviced from the front only.

The Surgery is accessed mainly from the front of the building however there is a level access from the rear into the main stair for surgery users who are unable to walk comfortably to the main entrance. This will be controlled via an intercom.

The surgery has a main entrance on the ground floor adjacent to the pharmacy entrance in order to control access and aid natural patient flow. The majority of the accommodation is on the first floor including the waiting area.

Waste Management

A combined refuse area is provided to the rear of the site within the car park area. This storage area will have dedicated general, recycled and clinical waste collection areas. The bin store will be of solid construction and have a roof for security.

6.0 Appearance



The existing building is of brick construction with a flat roof of built up felt. This is somewhat incongruous with the general area characterised of a mixture of brick walls and slate roofs.

The proposed appearance would look to utilise elements of the evolved pallet of the area. The façade will be principle of brick with the use of feature bands of complementary brick work to give the elevation some highway.

The roof material that is proposed is to be fibre cement artificial slates in a heather colour. This dark slate will blend with a variety of roof materials and colours in the area.

Window and doors will be grey with the windows in uPVC slim profiles and the doors in Aluminium.

8.0 Landscaping

The applicant has prepared an Arboriculture Method Statement, Ecology Report and Landscaping proposal all of which form part of this application.

The Arboriculture Method Statement looks at the protection of the trees to the rear of the site and also makes a case for the removal of the Sycamore to the front of the site to enable development and to address current and future risks to the building and to users. As the report makes clear St Martins Road already has a good deal of mature trees lining the roadway and with a replacement tree to the front of the development this will mitigate the removal and ensure long term amenity of the frontage group.

The applicant has also commissioned an ecology report; this has identified the current ecological value of the site as low. The report then seeks to identify the ecological features of the site and then propose methods to be implemented as part of the development to ensure the proposals only have a small negative impact on the ecological value of the site.

The landscaping proposals also seek to minimise the impact that the development has on the ecological value of the site by introducing planting beds made up of native plant species and the introduction of a 5 year management plan to ensure upkeep of the soft landscaping. A replacement tree is to be provided to the front of the site to soften the street scene with complementary planting to the back edge of the pavement. Details of all the surveys can be found in the appendices.

9.0 Sustainability

The new development will allow for current sustainability 'Best Practice' to be adopted and incorporated wherever practically possible. Sustainability considerations have been integral to the design development process, looking at both passive and active techniques. Various different technologies and building forms were considered at feasibility stage, but some were discarded as inappropriate for this site.

The Doctors Surgery will achieve a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating and the Pharmacy, Library and Residential units have been designed to incorporate as many passive techniques as feasible order to maintain high levels sustainable performance.

Appendixes

- Appendix 1** – Biodiversity / Ecology Report
- Appendix 2** – Flood Risk / Drainage Assessment
- Appendix 3** – Preliminary Contaminated Land Risk Assessment
- Appendix 4** – Noise Impact Assessment
- Appendix 5** – Transport Assessment
- Appendix 6** – Green Travel Plan
- Appendix 7** – Tree Survey / Planting / Landscaping Plan
- Appendix 8** – Daylight / Sunlight Study
- Appendix 9** – Statement from NHS Hertfordshire
- Appendix 10** – Patient Participation Group Support Letter
- Appendix 11** – Statement from Libraries service

