

Planning Policy Comments

Application No	APP/20/01115
Address	North Street House, 6 North Street, Emsworth, PO10 7DD
Development	Conversion of 2.5-storey surgery [Class E(e)] building to hotel (Class C1); replacement of single-storey surgery [Class E(e)] building with two-storey café [Class E(b)]
Case Officer	TP
Comments By	JB
Date of Comments	10/07/2023

Policy Status

The [Local Plan \(Core Strategy\)](#) and the [Local Plan \(Allocations\)](#), together with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan form the development plan for the borough. In this area, the [Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan](#) also forms part of the development plan.

Proposed Uses

The Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan, through policy C2 supports 'commercial, business and service uses (class E)' on High Street. Policy AL3 of the Local Plan supports main town centre uses, in particular those that generate pedestrian activity.

Policy criterion W2a) of the Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan confirms support for development which would contribute to the range and diversity of Emsworth's tourism and employment activities. This is further supported by policy W4, criterion b), which supports developments which are focussed on further growth of the tourism industry. Similarly, Policy CS5 of the Local Plan also supports proposals that provide hotel accommodation.

The principle of the proposed uses in this location is therefore clearly supported by adopted policy.

Notwithstanding this in principle active support through policy for the proposed use, the adopted Local Plan also includes policy regarding the loss of the last use on the site. This is discussed further below.

Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Shops

Policy DM2 of the adopted plan seeks to protect existing (or sites last used for) community facilities and shops, and both policies set out requirements which applicants must meet before such a loss will be supported.

The supporting text to DM2 explicitly includes health facilities in the uses to which this policy applies (paragraph 10.08). Under this policy, the applicant is required to undertake an active marketing exercise to demonstrate the premises are 'no longer viable for their authorised use or any other use which would provide a beneficial facility to the local community'. In addition, alternative provision of the facility must be demonstrated. The new surgery a very short distance to the north of the application site clearly meets the second criterion.

It is noted that no such marketing was requested under a previous application under reference APP/20/01115, and permission was nevertheless granted. However, this decision took into account emerging policy which relaxed this requirement, but which has since been withdrawn. In addition, the office use proposed through that application did not require permission, since both the former surgery and the office uses fall within the same use class. This is not true of the hotel use now proposed, which requires specific permission for a change of use.

Since the doctors vacated the site, the property has changes hands twice, both times through active marketing of the site. The applicant has provided evidence of the marketing, and has included information on the offers received, which did not include alternative community uses.

Taking into account the combined factors that marketing has taken place, that the doctors' surgery has been replaced nearby and that the proposed use, while not strictly a community use, is an active commercial use providing facilities to the local community, it is considered that the requirements of policy DM2 have been satisfied.

Amenity

Policy DM5 of the Local Plan must be satisfied in regard to amenity considerations in relation to food and drink uses, in particular in relation to noise or odour generating activities and equipment.

Parking

It is noted that onsite parking is proposed, which falls slightly short of the standard required for hotels in the Council's parking SPD. This does not appear to have been specifically justified by the applicant, but it is assumed is determined by the available space on site. Given the location of the development in the town centre, which is both accessible by other modes of transport and has public car parking provision nearby, the amount of parking proposed is considered acceptable in policy terms.

Secure long term cycle parking for staff is provided.

It is noted that short stay cycle parking is proposed within the parking area to the rear. In the interest of promoting sustainable travel, it is suggested that part of this provision would be better located at the front of the property. This would make the provision more obvious to potential users, and also allow cyclists the choice of where to park their bicycles: short term café or hotel bar customers may prefer to park at the front, where they are more likely to arrive, while hotel guests may prefer cycle parking in the car park.