

Marketing and Policy Statement

For

**Alterations and
Changes of Use
Davies Pharmacy, 12 West Street,
Havant, Hampshire,
PO9 1PF.**

For

Mr. K. Seston

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1.0 Generally

- 1.1 This Marketing Statement is in support of a Planning Application to the Havant Borough Council to Alter the premises 'Davies Pharmacy' at 12 West Street, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 1PF, and to convert the upper floors for residential use (C3), and the out buildings for Retail Use (A1)
- 1.2 No other purpose is anticipated or accepted. Copyright of this report remains with Martin Critchley Chartered Architect.
- 1.3 Reference should be made to the planning submission drawings for details of the proposals, ref:-

1317-	201	Location Plan
	202	Block Plan
	203	Site Plan
	205	Existing floor plans
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2.0 Physical Context

- 2.1 West Street is within the town centre of Havant. It is one of the principal shopping streets, running east-west. The site is on the north side of the street, such that the principal elevation faces south.
- 2.2 The north side of the street has been heavily developed with 3 and 4 storey buildings. Immediately to the west is the entrance to 'The Meridian Centre' shopping mall.
- 2.3 The south side of the street contains St. Faith's Church, and churchyard. The Church was rebuilt in the 19th Century, on the site of an earlier 12th Century church.
- 2.4 The rear boundary of the site extends through to a delivery yard for the Meridian Centre. There is vehicular access through this yard via an entrance on North Street.

- 2.5 The site is currently a Retail Pharmacy. An area of the ground floor to the west (postal address 12B West Street) is a small lock up shop, used until December 2012 as a greengrocers.
- 2.6 The first floor (postal address 12A West Street) is currently part staff and part storage accommodation for the ground floor shop. It was previously in use as Solicitor's offices until approximately 1995. Previously, (1940-50), the upper floors were used as residential accommodation.
- 2.7 The site slopes up slightly to the rear. There are no trees on the development site. The frontage is on the 'back of pavement' line.
- 2.8 To the west and north, the site is bounded by the three storey sheer brick perimeter walls of the Meridian Shopping Centre.
- 2.9 The general character of West Street to the east of Park Road is town centre retail, with a mix of first floor residential, and storage uses.
- 2.10 At the site, West Street is a pedestrianised area, with restricted loading. There is full street lighting.
- 2.11 The site is within the St. Faith's Conservation Area.

3.0 Social / Economic Context

- 3.1 Havant is a busy little town, of the type often referred to as a 'Market Town', although it never had a cattle market. Current economic forces are driven by the railway station with good connections to London Waterloo, the location of the Borough administration, and by social and tourist activities related to the adjacent coast and harbours. Outside the town are industrial estates with high technology manufacturing in computing, aerospace and pharmaceutical industries.
- 3.2 The basic street pattern of the town centre was laid down by the Romans – north, south, east and west streets - and there has been a retail element on the street ever since.

- 3.3 The town centre serves the immediate hinterland, and the adjacent communities of Hayling Island, Leigh Park, Rowlands Castle and Emsworth..
- 3.4 The site has been in commercial use for at least 150 years, generally in the present form. The chemist' shop and pharmacy use is believed to be continuous for that period.
- 3.5 West Street, east of Park Road remains a busy commercial area, despite new retail parks nearby to the west of Park Road.
- 3.6 The subject building has been much altered and extended. The original building, comprising the eastern half of the site is thought to have been Georgian, although there are indications below ground level of earlier construction. Substantial additions were made during the Victorian period, and variously up until WW II. There is documentary evidence of various outbuildings and stores, previously extending northwards beyond the present curtilage. The land to the north, now part of The Meridian Centre, was once orchards.
- 3.7 The subject proposals are an opportunity to restore a residential use on the site, and to provide new uses for the redundant and under-used accommodation. Residential use in the town centre is desirable to stimulate a balanced community and to prevent a 'ghost town' after hours. The Change of Use to residential is consistent with current Government policies to make 'best use' of brownfield sites.
- 3.8 Within 1000 metres of the site there are:-
- * Public Houses
 - * Health Centre
 - * Library
 - * Town Park - Recreation Ground
 - * Havant Railway Station
 - * Bus Station
 - * Primary and Secondary Schools
 - * Churches
 - * Super Stores.

Noting all of the above the site is considered to be highly sustainable in that all of the facilities listed (and more not listed) are available within easy walking distance of the site.

- 3.9 Public Car Parking is available in the Meridian Centre Multi Storey car park 150 M to the north and in the Bulbeck Road Multi Storey car park 250 metres to the south west. 30 minutes free parking is available in the adjacent streets during working hours, and free overnight.
- 3.10 The site is considered highly sustainable for residential use, in that the services and facilities for modern life are all available within walking distance. The local streets are all paved, with footpaths and with effective street lighting.
- 3.11 There is a proven and actual demand for rented, residential accommodation in Havant, based on the variety of local facilities, as 3.8 above, and on the good local employment opportunities, as 3.1 above. All of the local Estate Agents (5 within 100 metres of the site) have strong and active letting departments. **Policy CS.9** of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (March 2011) is applicable :- Particularly sub-sections of the policy 4) and 5), See 5.11 below.
- 3.12 As above, by re-using the existing building with minimum alteration, the proposals are inherently sustainable, by minimising demolition disposals and reducing new construction supply and delivery requirements.

4.0 Viability of the Proposals.

- 4.1 As per 2.5 and 2.6 above, the upper floors are currently underused as stores and staff accommodation. The accommodation itself is in poor condition, suffering from protracted periods of neglect.
- 4.2 The ground floor pharmacy has not been updated since the late 1960's, and is now :-
- a. Dilapidated.
 - b. Stylistically out of date.
 - c. Inefficient in layout.
 - d. Inappropriate for modern retail use.

The applicants are proposing a programme of investment and works to address all of the above.

- 4.3 Generally as 3.8 > 3.12 above the site is well positioned. This is even more so in respect of retail use than for residential. The site is on a principal shopping frontage of the Havant Town Centre, in the transition zone of restricted traffic access before the full pedestrian access to West Street, 50 metres to the west. There is a high incidence of pedestrian passing trade from the east.
- 4.4 A vehicular service access to the rear of the site, via the Meridian Centre yard is another commercial advantage.
- 4.5 The outbuildings at the rear of the site (mostly of Victorian origin) are in poor condition and underutilised. They are not appropriate for pharmaceutical and cosmetics storage and use.
- 4.6 Modern pharmacy retailing seeks to minimise stocks held on site, such that prescription items are fresh and cosmetic items are the latest fashion colours and fragrances. The existing extent of storage available on site is very much in excess of that required for efficient retailing.
- 4.7 A covered vehicular access to the west most part of the frontage, a former access through to the rear yard, has latterly been used (ended December 2012) as a 'lock up' green grocers stall. It is debatable as to the compliance this arrangement had in terms of health and safety legislation.
- 4.8 Noting the above, the pharmacy business can be consolidated into the eastern section of the premises, taking advantage of the reduced storage requirements, and the increased efficiencies in layout. Shown as Shop A in the proposals.
- 4.9 By replanning the old vehicular access, with a narrower pedestrian access, and the area released from the old dispensary, a second self-contained shop can be created with the western part of the frontage, and a service access from the rear. Shown as Shop B in the proposals. This can be refitted with the accommodation brought up to modern standards, of use and safety. This will increase the display window frontage onto West Street, and increase the overall

retail viability of the site. (Commercial leases are based on display window dimensions).

- 4.10 As 4.9 above, with a new pedestrian access formalised into the rear of the site, there is an opportunity to re-use the redundant store buildings for a related medical/commercial use. There is an established pattern, and demand in the town centre for health and beauty related premises, in secondary locations.

For example:-

- Holoistic medicine
- Oriental medicine
- Podiatrist
- Massage
- Sports Clinic
- Homeopathy.
- Occulist
- Nail bars.

With restrictions to general health services through the NHS, there is increasing emphasis on local health care, through health centres and G.P. practices. This is reflected in a demand at the pharmacy for extended services, directly to the public.

It is on this basis that two consulting rooms are proposed behind 'Shop B' with independent access via the new passage, for short term rental for health and well being related uses. The physical arrangement is such that these could be used after shop hours, for evening consultations. It is anticipated there will be a mutually supportive 'halo' effect around the pharmacy and the consulting rooms, which will benefit both, and will stimulate activity on the site and in the neighbourhood.

4.11 Considering the above proposals and the employment opportunities :-

	Full Time Equivalent	
Existing Pharmacy (as 2.5) above	5	
Proposed Pharmacy – Shop ‘A’		5
Proposed Shop ‘B’		3
Consulting Room (1)		2
Consulting Room (2)		2
Totals	5	12

The proposals when complete will provide 7 additional full time positions.

5.0 Policy considerations

5.1 The site is within the St. Faith’s Conservation Area. **Policy CS.11/1 and CS.11/4** of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (March 2011) is applicable.

5.2 The site is within the ‘Town Centre’ of Havant, and the town centre policies apply. **Policy CS.4** of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (March 2011) is applicable

5.3 **Policy DM.3** of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (March 2011) is applicable : Protection of Existing Employment and tourism Sites.

5.4 As a broad overview we would suggest that within the premises, the new proposals will provide employment as (4.11 above) with **7** new full time positions, equal to that previously in use by the Solicitors, say :-

Partners	2
Clerks	2
Secretaries	2
Receptionist	1

Total **7**

5.5 Noting particularly 4.1 above, the upper floors of the building are not fit for purpose. It is debatable whether they are fit for **ANY** purpose, due to their poor condition.

5.6 It is our view that it is beyond economic repair to bring the upper floors back into use as offices, based on the current rents achievable for similar accommodation. Part of the problem is that the accommodation available in a quirky old building only has a limited appeal for modern office use which generally requires open plan spaces with abundant services and communications connections. Therefore :-

Assuming a refurbishment cost of £ 600.00 /M²

Current rent achievable £ 75.00 /M²/p.a.

Rent Capitalised at 12 Y.P. £ 900.00 /M²

This is a poor rate of return, and assuming a full and immediate occupancy, will not cover the cost of the refurbishment works until year eight. Further, if there are periods of vacancy, the obligations for the owners to pay vacant business rates will extinguish the balance of the profit. This is too great a financial risk for a substantial outlay of capital.

5.7 The office use effectively ceased in 1995 when the solicitors occupying the upper floors moved out.

5.8 Messres Hughes Ellard, commercial agents, marketed the offices for rent in 1996. See Appendix photograph. The campaign was unsuccessful and no new tenants came forward. The offices have not been used as such since. They have been part used as retail storage on the first floor until the new owners took over in the spring of 2013.

5.9 The failure to re-let the offices is in large part due to their poor and inappropriate condition. See 4.2, 5.5 and 5.6 above. Overall they do not represent a fitness for purpose.

5.10 Current policy guidance from Dept. for Communities and Local Government :- Letter to Chief Planning Officers 24th January 2013...

“...permitted development rights for change of use from B1(a) office to C3 residential purposes...”

This could not be clearer in its intention. It recognises the overall picture in Britain where there is a surplus of vacant office accommodation and a shortage of residential accommodation, with new housing starts lagging behind housing demand, year on year. This is a sustainable response to recycling the existing building stock for new and necessary uses. The subject proposals fit this policy perfectly. There is an established demand locally for rental flats and not so for offices. Havant Borough Council have themselves substantially reduced the demand for offices in the town centre, with the deliberate and aggressive promotion of the new business parks at Broadmarsh, and at Langstone Technology Park.

- 5.11 The Government sponsored review of the state of the nation's high streets :- 'The Portas Review' – Mary Portas, December 2011, makes clear recommendations :-

pp.14 *“I want to put the heart back into the centre of our high streets....
...The new high streets won't just be about selling goods. The mix will include shops but could also include, housing, offices, sport, schools or other social, commercial, and cultural enterprises and meeting places.”*

It is exactly this sort of vision which is behind the subject proposals, based around the community healthcare function of the pharmacy, and extended into the creation of the Consulting Rooms.

pp.15 *“My goal is to breathe economic and community life back into our town centres. I want to see all our high streets bustling with people, services and jobs. They should be vibrant places that people choose to visit. They should be destinations. Anything less is a wasted opportunity.”*

It is our belief that the subject proposals will be better able to stimulate and deliver vibrant and economic life, than by re-instating the office uses.

- 5.12 From 'The Portas Review' Summary of Recommendations :-

- 11) *Government should include high street deregulation as part of their on going work on freeing up red tape.*

This subject report is a self fulfilment of 'red tape'.

- 12) *Address the restrictive aspects of the Use Class system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the high street.*

Policy DM3 is in effect a restrictive use of the Use Class system, and is in direct contravention with 5.8 above.

- 21) *Local Authorities should make more proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to encourage the redevelopment of key high street space.*

Whilst we are not seeking Compulsory Purchase powers related to the current proposals, the intention of the recommendation is clear that Local Authorities should be PROACTIVE TO ENCOURAGE REDEVELOPMENT OF KEY HIGH STREET SPACE. The proposals by their function and their location are a key site in Havant's West Street, deserving of full support from the local Authority. In this instance policy DM3 is an obstruction to proactive encouragement.

5.13 **Policy CS.9** of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (March 2011) is applicable :- Housing. Planning permission will be granted for housing that will :-

- 4) *“Achieve a suitable density of development for the location, taking into account accessibility to public transport and proximity to employment, shops and services in addition to respecting the surrounding landscape, character and built form.”*

The proposals meet all of these criteria.

- 5) *“Provide a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures which help meet identified local housing need and contribute to the development of mixed and sustainable communities.”*

The proposals will meet these criteria, consistent with the town centre location.

6.0 **Summary.**

6.1 The proposals are a sustainable opportunity to redevelop the site for optimum re-use of the existing buildings and to contribute to the vitality of Havant Town Centre.

- 6.2 Reinstating the office use of the upper floors is not commercially viable or likely to contribute to the vitality of the town centre, particularly 'after hours'.
- 6.3 Residential use of the upper floors is sustainable, commercially viable, and will make a positive contribution to Havant Town Centre.
- 6.4 The proposals are consistent with Government guidance to revitalise town centres.
- 6.5 The applicants are making a determined and positive effort to update and promote the retail use of the site, and deserve 'proactive encouragement' from the Local Authority.

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7, North Street, Havant,
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22nd August 2013.

Revised 4th September 2013.

7.0 Following Page

Photograph – 1996 – Hughes Ellard Board on Premises.



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