

# ***Planning Statement***

**NO. 64 WEST STREET, HAVANT, HANTS, PO9 1LN**

**CHANGE OF USE OF CLASS B1(A) OFFICE  
TO PERIODONTAL DENTAL SURGERY (CLASS D1)**

## **1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 This statement accompanies and supports a planning application submitted by Dr Amanda Biddle to change the use of No.64 West Street from a Class B1(a) office to use as a Class D1 specialist periodontal dental surgery. If granted planning permission Dr Biddle would be able to relocate her existing surgery from No.4 Havant Road, Emsworth (where she has practiced since 2006) to the application property.
- 1.2 The need to consider relocation has been brought about by a number of factors. Firstly, over the years, the demand for periodontal dental treatment has grown resulting in there being a real need to provide more facilities for local patients. Secondly, changing Care Quality Commission (CQC) requirements have meant that the practice has to improve both its decontamination facilities and its access arrangements (especially for the disabled).
- 1.3 It is apparent that the additional space needed to provide these improved facilities cannot be accommodated within the existing practice building, which is Grade II listed. Consequently, Dr Biddle needs to relocate her practice to more appropriate premises. The application property is considered to be ideal both in terms of its central location and the accommodation it provides. The proposal would bring back into use a long term vacant office building and also enable the practice to recruit additional staff and so create additional employment opportunity.
- 1.4 This statement describes our Client's proposal and places it in context with relevant local planning policy. It will be concluded that our Client's proposal should receive support and be granted planning permission.

## **2.0 Site and Surrounding Area**

- 2.1 The application site comprises the northern two thirds of a detached, former office building, located on the north-west corner of the junction of West Street and Park Road South. The southern third of the building (No.66) is occupied by a 'mihomecare' (a company providing home care services) which has a frontage directly onto West Street. This part of West Street consists of

a mix of commercial uses including a bank together with a mix of independent shops and service providers. The site is to the west of the defined Havant Town Centre, south of the Park Way Retail Park and to the north of the Solent Retail Park. The site is also within easy walking distance of both Havant Bus Station (which is on Elm Lane) and the towns Railway Station, which is at the top of North Street.



- 2.2 The site is set back from Park Road South by a distance of around 12m behind two footways and an open topped culverted section of the Lavant stream. Directly north of the application property is a pleasant parkland space known as Boys Brigade Gardens. A footway passes through the gardens linking West Street with the Park Way Retail Park.



- 2.3 The two storey application building is of brick construction beneath a barn hipped tiled roof. Entry to the building is gained via a door within the buildings east elevation. Door and window openings are formed with brown stained timber frames. Accommodation within the building is over three floors – i.e. ground floor, first floor and a 2nd floor within the converted roof void which is lit by rooflights. Other than a strip of land between the buildings west elevation and the adjacent boundary the property's curtilage is limited to the footprint of the building.

- 2.4 The building is located within the Black Dog Conservation Area and is within the area defined on the Havant Town Centre Map as a Regeneration Area. The footprint of the building is within Flood Zone 1, however, land immediately to the east (i.e. the Lavant Stream culvert) is within Flood Zone 3.

### 3.0 Application Proposal

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for a change of use of the existing building from a Class B1(a) office use to use as a specialist periodontal dental surgery which falls within Class D1. The proposal would not involve any external alterations to the building. Internal alterations would be limited to the blocking up of a few doorways and the subdivision of a room at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level.
- 3.2 This specialist periodontal dental practice would employ 3 full-time, 12 part-time members of staff. Staff would comprise 4 dentists, 4 hygienists, 4 dental nurses, 1 practice manager, 1 administrative clerk and 1 cleaner. Treatment would be provided by way of private appointments with the current practice in Emsworth accepting referrals from 250 local dentists. The practice would operate Monday to Friday between 8.30am - 5.30pm, Saturdays 8.30am – 1.00pm. The practice would be closed on Sundays or public holidays.
- 3.3 Further information about Dr Biddle's practice can be found at [www.emsworth-specialist-practice.co.uk](http://www.emsworth-specialist-practice.co.uk). It is of note that in November 2012 The Emsworth Specialist Practice was recognised as the 'UK's Best Periodontal Practice' at the Private Dentistry Awards.

### 4.0 Planning History

- 4.1 A number of applications have been submitted in the past at 64/66 West Street. These are as follows: -

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 00/50307/001 | Alterations to the fenestration at ground floor to east and south elevations. Permission Granted 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2000;                                               |
| 04/50307/002 | 3 'velux' roof windows to serve office accommodation. Permission granted 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2004;                                                                        |
| 08/50307/004 | Conversion of part ground floor and 1st & 2nd floors into 1No. retail unit and 3No. flats with retained offices. (Amended Application). Permission Granted 19 September 2008 ; |
| APP/13/00606 | Reinstatement of originally existing entrance door to east elevation. Permission Granted 15 August 2013;                                                                       |
| APP/14/00849 | Prior notification of change of use from class B1(a) office use to C3 residential use subject to prior approval covering flooding, highways and transport                      |

issues and contamination. Prior Approval Given 13  
October 2014

## 5.0 Planning Policy

### National Planning Policy

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government on 27th March 2012. The NPPF cancels and replaces all earlier Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements.
- 5.2 Paragraph 13 of the Framework sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Government states that 'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking....' The document promotes planning principles which include making effective use of land, promoting mixed use developments that create more vibrant places, and encouraging multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the document requires Local Planning Authorities to approach development management decisions positively (i.e. to look for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practical to do so).
- 5.3 The NPPF states (at para.7) that there are '... three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.' The social dimension of sustainable development is described in the NPPF as 'supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being'.
- 5.4 Amongst the Core Planning Principles described at paragraph 17 the NPPF states that planning should 'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.' Two further planning principles are to '... take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs...' and '.....conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations...' With regards to flooding this paragraph states that the planning system should take '...full account of flood risk and coastal change...'

### Havant Borough Local Development Framework

5.5 The Havant Borough Core Strategy was formerly adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. It is the principal document in the Council's Development Plan and sets out the spatial planning strategy for the area up to 2026. The relevant policies are as follows:

CS4 Town, District and Local Centres – encouragement of new comparison goods retail floorspace within identified centres;

CS6 Regeneration of the Borough - Planning permission will be granted for development which positively contributes by type of use and design and by its comprehensive approach to the social, economic and/or physical regeneration of the whole borough...;

CS11 Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough – this policy seeks to protect and where appropriate enhance the borough's statutory and non statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas, listed buildings;

CS14 Efficient use of Resources;

CS15 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk

'Development in areas at risk of flooding now and in the future as identified on the latest Environment Agency flood risk maps and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment climate change maps will only be permitted where:

1. It meets the sequential and exception test (where required) in relation to PPS25.
2. The site is located in a low hazard area as defined in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
3. A site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that the development will be safe, including the access, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.
4. The scheme incorporates flood protection, flood resilience and resistance measures appropriate to the character and biodiversity of the area and the specific requirements of the site.
5. Appropriate flood warning and evacuation plans are in place.
6. New site drainage systems are designed taking account of events which exceed the normal design standard...'

CS16 High Quality Design;

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|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CS20 | Transport and Access Strategy;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| DM3  | <p>Protection of Existing Employment and Tourism Sites –</p> <p>‘The change of use or development of land or premises currently or last used for B use class employment purposes to non-B use class employment will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the land or premises are not fit for purpose and financially unviable for B use class purposes. Where it is clearly demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for B use class employment, other types of economic development should be considered in the first instance. These uses will be expected to provide employment opportunities of similar quality and quantity as those which previously existed. Only if another type of economic development cannot be found which provides similar quality and quantity of employment opportunity, will other uses then be considered...’</p> |
| DM12 | Mitigating the Impacts of Travel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| DM14 | <p>Car and Cycle Parking on Development (excluding residential)</p> <p>Development will only be permitted where it provides parking for cars, motor cycles and cycles in accordance with the relevant standards. Such parking provision must be appropriately located in relation to the development and be practical for its intended use.</p> <p>B1(a) office - 1 space per 100 sqm Parking in highly accessible locations (30% of maximum permitted standard)</p> <p>Dentists - 1.5 spaces per consulting room</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

- 5.6 In July 2014 the Council adopted the Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations). Within this document is policy AL3 - Town, District and Local Centres – which encourages the provision of main town centre uses such as shops, restaurants, hotels, offices, arts and community facilities within town, district and local centres. The policy identifies ‘Primary Frontages’ within the Borough’s defined centres where it is intended that mainly shops should be located. Supporting paragraph 2.12 of this document states: ‘...Inside the defined shopping centre boundaries, proposed town centre uses are more likely to be granted planning permission, while outside the boundaries they are more likely to be refused...’

## 6.0 Planning Considerations

### Background

- 6.1 The application proposal seeks a grant of planning permission for the change of use of the existing building from a Class B1(a) office to a specialist periodontal dental surgery which falls within Class D1. The application would

result in the reuse of a building which has been vacant since the previous occupiers, Verisona Solicitors, relocated to Lakeside in Portsmouth in 2013.

- 6.2 The application premises are considered to be ideal by the applicant who currently runs her nationally acclaimed practice from a two storey Grade II listed building in Emsworth. The application premises are larger than her current building and are very well located in relation to Havant's railway and bus stations as well publically available car parking at the adjacent Park Way Retail Park and nearby Meridian Centre.
- 6.3 Dr Biddle has operated her current practice from No.4 Havant Road, Emsworth since 2006 (Ref: 06/55539/006). Initially, the practice operated on just the ground floor, however, as the demand for appointments increased it was necessary to expand the surgery by utilising the buildings 1<sup>st</sup> floor. This was achieved in 2008 when planning permission was granted for the variation of conditions which allowed the residential accommodation to be used as part of the surgery (Ref: 08/55539/011). In 2013 the need for additional accommodation again became acute. Permission was gained for the provision of a 'micro-office' in the enclosed side courtyard (Ref: APP/13/00526).
- 6.4 Periodontal (or gum) disease is the commonest cause for tooth loss in adults and treatment often requires specialist care. As such, the demand for appointments has continued to increase resulting in the need for Dr Biddle to find alternative accommodation. The applicant has considered extending her existing premises, however, realises that this would prove to be extremely difficult bearing in mind the building is Grade II listed and also has a fairly small curtilage. Additionally, changing CQC requirements have meant that the practice has to improve both its decontamination facilities and its access arrangements (especially for the disabled). These new requirements would be very difficult to provide within Dr Biddle's existing surgery.
- 6.5 Consequently, the applicant now seeks a change of use of the building at No.64 West Street to a dental surgery. The ground floor would comprise a surgery and a hygienists room together with a reception area, waiting room and appointments room. The first floor would accommodate 2 additional surgeries, another hygienists room, a waiting room and a decontamination / store room. The second floor of accommodation would consist of a manager's office and other staff facilities. The change of use would be facilitated by a few minor internal alterations. No external changes are proposed.

### **Policy Considerations**

- 6.6 When assessed in relation to current planning policy it is apparent that there are a number of relevant issues to consider.

### ***Principle of Use***

- 6.7 Firstly, whether the use of the building as a dentist's surgery is acceptable in principle. The site falls within Havant's defined town centre where retail and community uses are encouraged. The site does not fall within West Street's 'Primary Frontage' meaning that it is not necessary for the proposal to be assessed in relation to the "50%" retail use test of policy AL3.
- 6.8 Having previously been occupied as a Class B1(a) office it is necessary to consider the proposal in relation to policy DM3 - Protection of Existing Employment and Tourism Sites. This policy seeks to protect Class B business floorspace. However, the policy does state '...Where it is clearly demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for B use class employment, other types of economic development should be considered in the first instance...' This policy requires a small employment site to be actively marketed for a minimum of 12 months.
- 6.9 The building at 64 West Street has been empty for a period of around 18 months. Agents Vail Williams LLP have marketed the site for an extensive period and have provided a marketing report at Appendix I. In summary, they have advertised the premises widely (newspaper, email and internet) and have as such attracted a number of prospective occupiers. However, having viewed the property many potential office users have indicated that a highly compartmentalised building with numerous rooms would not suit their needs. Most office working practices require open plan spaces. Following a lack of interest in the use of the building as offices Vail Williams applied for, and obtained, prior approval for the use of the premises as residential accommodation (Ref: APP/14/00849). This approval has not been implemented to date.
- 6.10 The current application seeks to utilise the existing building as a dental surgery. As such, the building would be provide employment for 15 people – i.e. 3 full time and 12 part time jobs. Whilst several of these jobs would be relocated from the existing practice in Emsworth the proposal would result in the creation of 4-6 extra jobs that would be provided in a staged way. Given the foregoing it is considered that the use of the building as a dental surgery would provide similar levels of employments as a B1(a) use and would, therefore, be compliant with policy DM3.

#### ***Flood Risk***

- 6.11 It is apparent that whilst the footprint of the building itself is within Flood Zone 1 the land immediately to the east, around Lavant Stream, falls within Flood Zone 3.
- 6.12 The application for prior approval which was approved on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014 was accompanied by a flood risk assessment. This study identified that the building was within Flood Zone 1 but also recognised the proximity of the adjacent Flood Zone 3 area to the east. The study concluded that future occupiers of the building would not be placed at risk from flooding as the site

was within a Flood Zone 1 area and there did exist a safe route of escape should it be needed. Indeed, in their report Officers commented: -

‘The site is located within Flood Zone 1, however it is adjacent to a stream and an area within Flood Zone 3. The EA have been consulted and have confirmed that floor levels are currently above predicted flood levels and that an existing escape route mitigate the risk. It is not considered that flood risk is an overriding concern in relation to this development.’

- 6.13 It is considered that the use of the building as a dentist surgery would be less ‘sensitive’ than would its use as a dwelling. It is very unlikely that staff would be present within the building at night time (unlike a dwelling) when the risk from flooding would be at its highest. Given the above it is considered that the use of the building as a dentist’s surgery would not place future occupiers or patients at risk and would, therefore, be acceptable in relation to policy CS15.

#### ***Accessibility and Parking***

- 6.14 Finally, the existing building at No.64 West Street has a very limited curtilage. As such, it is not possible for the buildings occupier to provide either car or cycle parking facilities within the site. It is recognised from the Council’s parking standards that a dentist’s surgery with 3 surgeries and 2 hygienists rooms would be likely to generate a slightly greater number of vehicle movements than would the use of the building as an office. Given that staff numbers would be broadly similar (between a dentists surgery and an office) it is understood that the higher standard set for a dentists surgery would be to meet the needs of patients.
- 6.15 The applicant recognises that all patients require easy and convenient access to her surgery. Car users would have access to 2 hours free parking within the adjacent Park Way Retail Park. Additionally, alternative public car parking is available at the Meridian Centre. Other patients would be likely to access the surgery by either bus or train. Given that the site is within 200m of the bus station and 500m of the railway station it is anticipated that a significant number of patients will arrive in Havant on public transport.
- 6.16 Appendix 5 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that highly accessible developments (i.e. sites served by at least six buses an hour within 500 metres and good cycling and pedestrian facilities) would warrant less car parking than is shown under the maximum parking limit. This part of the Core Strategy also says that matters such as ‘Existing public parking stock with spare capacity within walking distance of the development site should be included in the overall maximum parking provision.’ Furthermore, it is noted that paragraph 5.5 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) states that ‘Proposals within the Havant Town Centre boundaries will be expected to have a reduced or even zero standard of vehicle parking provision in order to maximise the use of land and discourage the use of private motor vehicles.’

- 6.17 Given the foregoing, it is considered that the proposed use of this building as a dentists surgery would comply with policy DM14.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 In conclusion it is considered that the proposed use of the existing Class B1(a) office premises as a Class D1 specialist periodontal dental surgery would be in compliance with both National planning policy guidance and the policies of the Havant Local Plan.
- 7.2 The proposed change of use would ensure that a long term vacant building within the Havant Town Centre is re-occupied by a use that will serve the needs of the wider community. The proposal would enable the applicant's existing dental practice to relocate to larger premises which would also allow the business to expand and create additional jobs within the Borough. If permission is not forthcoming it is likely that the applicant would have to consider finding alternative premises outside of the Borough.
- 7.3 It is respectfully requested, therefore, that Officers and Members of the Borough Council look favourably on this proposal and grant planning permission.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Email from Marketing Agents Vail Williams LLP**