Design and Access Statement

1.0 Site address:

Big Foot Independent Hospital
Birch Hall Lane
Manchester
M13 0XE

2.0 Contact Details:

Applicant

Equilibrium Health Care
Bollin House
Riverside Park
Bollin Link road
Wilmslow, Cheshire
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Agent

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3.0 Description of Development:

Provision of a new external staircase and emergency exit from first floor to rear garden area.

4.0 Context:

The site operates as an Independent Hospital, located in a mixed use, but mainly residential area of Rusholme. The original premises comprised a large detached house which has been extensively extended to form the present building form. The existing building is constructed with facing brick walls and slate/tile covered roof.

Changes in the operation of the unit dictate that a dedicated route between the first floor accommodation and the rear garden area and emergency escape should be provided to improve security and safe operation of the facility.

5.0 Design Principles and Concepts:

The staircase will be used to provide occasional recreational access for patients on the first floor to directly access the rear garden area. This access will normally be controlled by staff. In addition, changes necessary to the internal layout at first floor level require a new escape route from first floor level.

The proposed staircase is designed to fulfil both these functions. It is designed as a partially enclosed staircase to give shelter to the staircase to allow safe use in all weather conditions so as to fulfil it's function as an escape staircase. In addition, the enclosure is designed to protect the adjacent residential area from any potential nuisance the use of the staircase might otherwise cause. The escape door opens

against the open end of the enclosure at upper landing and we have extended the enclosure at the bottom to beyond the front line of No15 Beck Foot Drive.

The arrangement of the staircase is dog legged to avoid existing kitchen ventilation system and manholes at ground level and to maintain access under the staircase and around the building. The upper landing is supported on brickwork built off the existing staircase walls to provide a fire protected route. The external appearance has been softened by using vertically orientated unpainted treated timber which masks the outline of the staircase, whilst the natural patination of the main vertical galvanised steel framework adds to the interest of the structure. The roof is of translucent material to maximise natural lighting. Electric lighting will be installed to the minimum illumination levels necessary only and this will be supported with emergency lighting to comply with Fire Regulations.

The proposal seeks to minimise impact on the neighbouring dwellings screening and controlled use. The staircase is designed for independent use by ambulant people in accordance with it's primary function as an escape staircase. Existing facilities within the premises are available for use by disabled people under staff control.

6.0 Local Development Framework [Local Plan] and Consultation

The proposal is an adaption/alteration for the existing use.

7.0 Access to the development / public transport:

The existing building is access from Birch Hall Road, which is a well lit and adequately surfaced public highway. Public transport facilities [bus routes] are available within a short walking distance.

Disabled access to the existing building is by way of the front entrance which is accessed from the car park. Level access is provided through the main entrance via a ramped approach.

8.0 Conclusion:

The proposal forms a necessary part of the ongoing development of the business, reflecting the changing requirements of legislation and operation. The proposed staircase provides controlled direct access to the benefits of outside recreational space for certain patient groups without compromising security and safety of the facility as a whole, for the well being of patients. The staircase fulfils the need to provide additional emergency escape from the first floor to ensure the continued safe operation of the building.

The design respects the proximity of adjacent residents and provides adequate screening to prevent nuisance. The use of the staircase is under management control and is regulated by company policies and staffing requirements which can be amended to respond to any issues of use.

AJ Cocker Associates
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