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Planning, Design and Access Statement

Conversion of an integral garage to 2 no. consultation rooms and the installation of 2 no. windows

At

Chorlton Health Centre,
1 Nicolas Road,
Chorlton-cum-Hardy,
M21 9NJ

October 2023

Document Control Sheet

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning & Design Practice is a multidisciplinary practice consisting of chartered town planners, architects and heritage specialists. The practice operates across England and Wales and has an exemplary track record of submitting successful planning applications and in creating sustainable development.

1.2 We have been instructed by NHS Property Services ('the applicant') to prepare and submit an application for the conversion of an integral garage to 2 no. consultation rooms and the installation of 2 no. windows at Chorlton Health Centre, 1 Nicolas Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, M21 9NJ.

1.3 This report has been structured to provide an introduction to the site and discuss its planning history. Details of the proposed development and the rationale for it; and an examination of the key planning issues to be considered.

1.4 Also submitted to accompany the report are the following:

- Site Location Plan;
- Existing Floor Plans & Elevations;
- Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations; and
- Proposed External Elevations.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PLANNING HISTORY

Site Location

2.1 Chorlton Health Centre is a community health centre lying on the corner of Nicolas Road and Manchester Road. The site lies in the centre of Chorlton-cum-Hardy to the southwest of Manchester city centre. The site is 500m from Chorlton tram stop and close to many bus stops with links into the centre of Manchester.



Figure 1: Aerial view of the site (edged in red)

2.2 There are no major policy designations on the site. The site is within the Chorlton District Centre and adjacent to the Chorlton Conservation Area, as shown in Figure 2. The site is in Flood Zone 1, meaning it is at the lowest risk of flooding. There are no listed buildings on or in the vicinity of the site.

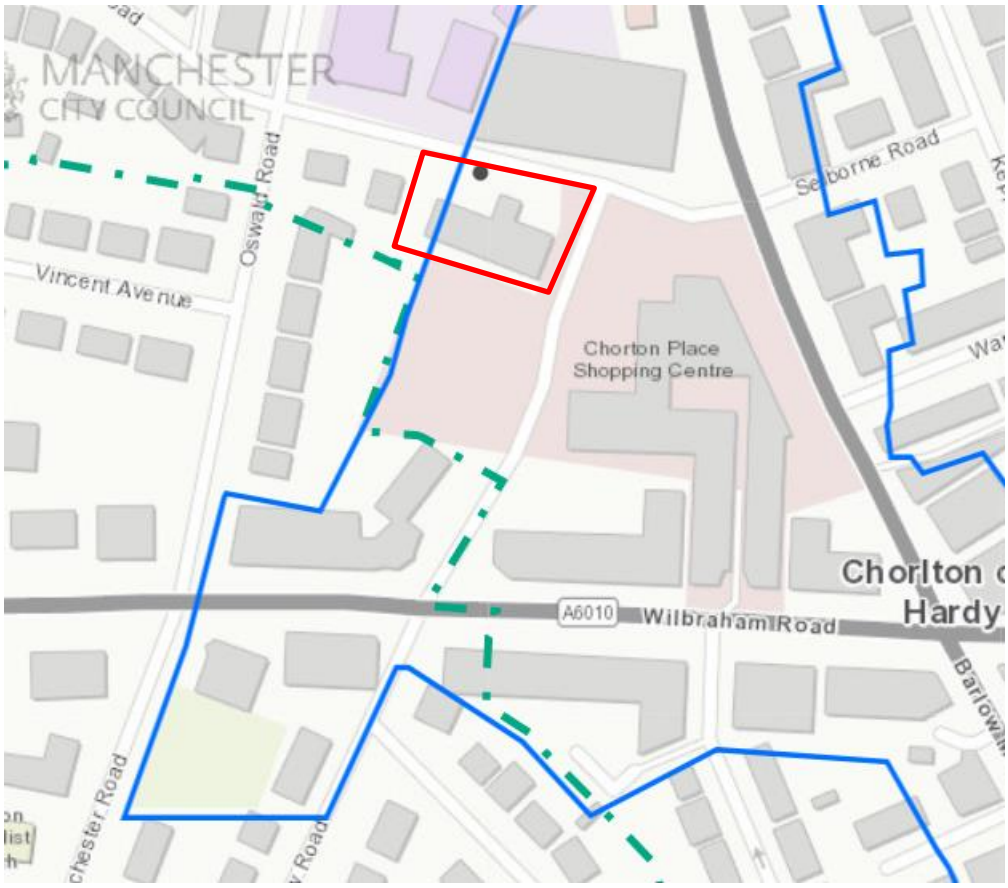


Figure 2: Policy Map highlighting the site's location (edged in red) in relation to the Chorlton District Centre (blue line) and the Chorlton Conservation Area (green dashed line)

Relevant Planning History

117212/FO/2017	Installation of access ramp and reconfiguration of car park	Approved – 31st October 2017

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of an integral garage to 2 no. consultation rooms and the installation of 2 no. windows at Chorlton Health Centre, 1 Nicolas Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, M21 9NJ.

3.2 The proposed development would provide additional consultation rooms to cope with the demand for more appointments at the health centre. Two new windows would be located on the rear elevation, replacing the existing garage doors.

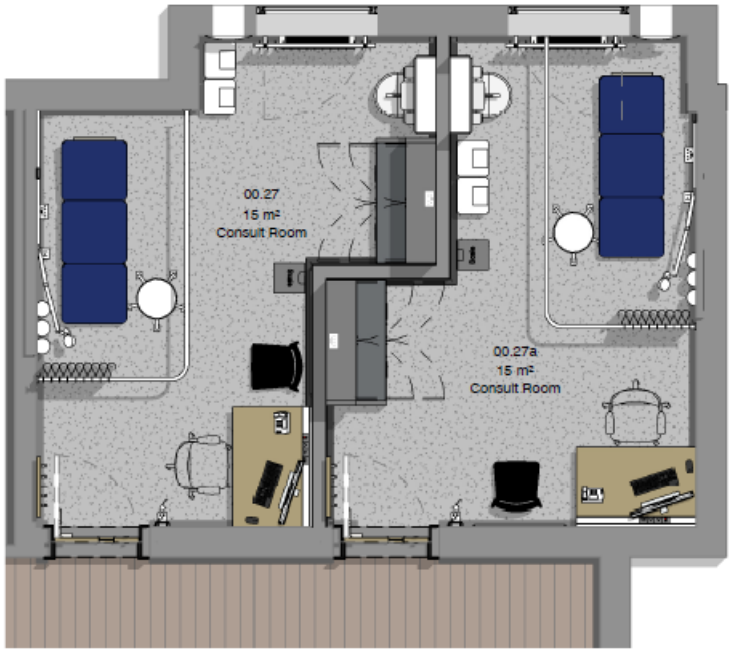


Figure 3: General Arrangement Plan

3.3 The new consultation rooms would be accessed internally from the existing Health Centre.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The purpose of this section is to set out the relevant planning policy background which is pertinent to the site and proposed development.

4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.3 The Development Plan consists of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012-2027) and the Extant Unitary Development Policies. Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the Government's overarching planning guidance document. The revised NPPF was published in July 2021. Relevant paragraphs include:

4.5 **Paragraph 7** – *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement* of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-*being and environmental protection".*

4.6 **Paragraph 8** – "Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe spaces, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs *and support communities' health, social and cultural well*-being; and

c) c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and *adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

4.7 **Paragraph 11** – *"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable* development. For plan-making this means that: a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by *making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects."*

4.8 **Paragraph 81** - *"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in* which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs *and wider opportunities for development."*

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

4.9 The Manchester Core Strategy is defined as the key Development Plan Document, which sets out the long-term spatial vision for Manchester as well as objectives and the strategic policies to deliver that vision. Development proposals (planning applications) will be assessed against the policies in the Core Strategy.

4.10 **Policy SP 1: Spatial Principles** – *"The key spatial principles which will guide the strategic* development of Manchester to 2027 are:

…

Core Development Principles

Development in all parts of the City should:-

- Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-
    - Creating well designed places that enhance or create character
    - Making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents
    - Considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income.
    - Protect and enhance the built and natural environment.
- Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport *provision"*

4.11 **Policy EC9: South Manchester** – *"…Development proposals and planning applications* should have regard to:

- *Ensuring efficient use of existing employment space…"*

4.12 **Policy C1: Centre Hierarchy** – *"District centres have an essential role in providing key services to the City's neighbourhoods including shopping, commercial, leisure, public and* community functions, ensuring that residents can access such services easily. They are also a focus for the *City's residential neighbourhoods, providing an important opportunity* to define local character. *… Development in these centres should primarily respond to the* needs of the catchment and recognise the need to support the vitality and viability of other *centres."*

4.13 **Policy C2: District centres** – *"*Development will support thriving district centres, with distinct local character, providing a good range of accessible key services, including retail, health facilities, public services, leisure activities and financial and legal services.*"*

4.14 **Policy C6: South Manchester District Centres – Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme and Withington** – *"Redevelopment in Chorlton will provide a substantial increase in retail, alongside improvements to other commercial and community services."*

4.15 **Policy EN 1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas** – *"All development in* Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified

in national planning guidance and listed above and have regard to the strategic character *area in which the development is located. …* Design and Access Statements submitted with proposals for new development must clearly detail how the proposed development addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and supports the achievement of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives.*"*

4.16 **Policy EN 3: Heritage** – *"Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development* that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are *considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset."*

5 KEY PLANNING ISSUES

5.1 The key issues regarding the proposal have been identified as follows:

1. The principle of development;

2. The impact on the character and appearance of the existing site and the Conservation Area and its setting;

3. The impact on neighbouring land uses; and

4. The impact on highway safety.

The Principle of Development

5.2 The conversion of the garages to additional consultation rooms is acceptable in principle as it will make a positive contribution to the health, safety and well-being of residents by providing additional appointment slots and making them more accessible to residents. It will also increase employment opportunities in the Chorlton district. Therefore, the proposal accords with policies SP1, C1, C2 and C6 of the Core Strategy. Additionally, Core Policy EC9 allows development which ensures efficient use of existing employment space.

5.3 Therefore, in line with relevant policies of the development plan and paragraphs of the framework, the proposal is acceptable in principle.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Existing Site and the Conservation Area and its Setting

5.4 Chorlton Health Centre is a modern red brick commercial building. It is located within an established commercial area in Chorlton. Surrounding the site are various buildings of a similar character to the east and southeast, dwellings to the west and a car park to the south.

5.5 The size, shape, pattern and finish of the proposed windows would match the existing windows of the building. Given the nature of the proposed alterations, it is considered that

the development would not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area.

5.6 In line with policy EN1 of the Core Strategy, the development will follow the 7 principles of urban design, as listed below.

Character: a place with its own identity	The design of the health centre creates a unique identity at the border between the residential west of Chorlton and the District Centre to the east.
Continuity and enclosure: a place where public and private places are clearly distinguished	The existing ground floor plan shows that the health centre is set out with specific waiting rooms, consultation rooms and office space to distinguish public and private places, as well as the inclusion of green space outside of the centre.
Quality of the public realm: a place with attractive, and successful outdoor areas	The site is surrounded by trees with green space adjacent to the entrance.
Ease of movement: a place that is easy to get to and move through	The site is located within the residential district of Withington with access to on-site parking and public transport links.
Legibility: a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand	The development contains a staff parking area and bike storage at the entrance to the health centre with a public parking area to the back.
Adaptability: a place that can change very easily	The proposal highlights the development's flexibility to accommodate further appointments for residents by creating two more consultation rooms.

Diversity: a place with variety and choice	The site provides a variety of services for local residents with health care needs.

5.7 The site is not located within the Chorlton Conversation Area but is around 10m northeast of the boundary.

5.8 In line with policy EN3 of the Core Strategy, the development will preserve the historic environment, character, setting and accessibility of the Chorlton Conservation Area as there will be no external changes to the building apart from minor alterations to include windows.

5.9 For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that the character and appearance of the existing site, the Conservation Area and its setting will not be materially harmed by the development, in line with relevant policies of the Development Plan and paragraphs of the Framework.

The Impact on Neighbouring Land Uses

5.10 Due to the minimal changes to the exterior of the building, apart from the installation of two windows, the proposal will not result in any loss of privacy or overlooking for the occupants of neighbouring properties above what is already experienced.

5.11 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed alterations are compatible with neighbouring land uses.

The Impact on Highway Safety

5.12 The proposed minor alterations to the building do not require any changes to the existing site access. The proposal will not be detrimental to highway safety.

5.12.1 There are currently 20 members of staff on site with 15 car parking spaces and a public car park and on-street parking for patients. The inclusion of 2 no. new consultation rooms will not adversely impact on the parking available as there will be no change in employee numbers and there is currently ample parking for the demand by staff.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of an integral garage to 2 no. consultation rooms and the installation of 2 no. windows at Chorlton Health Centre, 1 Nicolas Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, M21 9NJ.

6.2 The proposed development would provide additional consultation rooms to cope with the demand for more appointments at the health centre. The development would not result in any loss of amenity or privacy for the occupants of neighbouring properties or negatively impact on the character and appearance of the existing site or surrounding Conservation Area and its setting.

6.3 The proposal does not raise any significant planning concerns. It is therefore concluded that the proposal complies with relevant policies in the Development Plan and that there are no other material considerations which count against the proposal. It is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.



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