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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS
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PLANNING STATEMENT

IN

SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION

FOR A CHANGE OF USE

FROM OFFICE TO PHARMACY

AT

3 VICTORIA CRESCENT WEST, BARNSLEY, YORKSHIRE S75 2AE

ON BEHALF OF

ASSURA PROPERTIES LTD & COHENS CHEMISTS

OUR REF: 10/2823/PA/R

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a joint planning application submitted on behalf of Assura Properties Ltd, the owner of the building and associated land which includes the Victoria Medical Centre, Victoria Day Nursery and associated car parking. The adjoining dental surgery is not in the ownership of Assura Properties Ltd. The co-applicant is Cohens Chemist of Nos 86-88 Summer Lane who proposes to transfer their pharmacy to No. 3, Victoria Crescent West as it is more conveniently located for the patients of the Medical Centre and Dental Practice who use their present shop.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The application site is one of two units which were built in the late 1990s at a similar time to the adjoining Medical Centre. It was formerly occupied as an office by the National Autistic Society until 10 May, 2010 when it was vacated. Cohens Chemist wish to relocate their pharmacy to this unit and it is intended that it would operate as a dispensary with a central seating area for customers to wait while their prescriptions are being dispensed. They wish to continue to sell a limited range of toiletries as in their existing shop. The first floor would be used for storage, staff facilities and a rest room. There would be no external alterations to the building.

2.2 Four parking spaces, adjacent to the entrance to the unit, would be reserved for the use of the pharmacy, one of which would be used by their delivery van as they operate a collection and delivery service for prescriptions. It is intended that three full time and four part-time staff would cover the 0830-1830 opening hours of the shop, Monday to Saturday.

3. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

3.1 The Statutory Development Plan is Barnsley UDP, most of policies having been saved until the Local Development Framework is adopted.

3.2 Policy S1 confirms that new retail development will be permitted only within the central shopping area of Barnsley town centre or within identified principal shopping or commercial centres. Although this proposed use might be considered a new retail development, nearly half of the ground floor area would be taken up with a dispensary and small consultation room and the remainder of the space would be a waiting area and staff facilities. The only retailing area would be around the periphery of the waiting area where toiletries could be perused and purchased. As this type of pharmacy use is associated with medical practices, it would not normally be located within the town or district centre but within a Primary Care Centre or adjacent to a Medical Centre like the application site. Therefore this unit provides an ideal and convenient location for the pharmacy which would not be harmful to other retailing areas in Barnsley.

3.3 The proposed use would fall within Policy S3 which considers retail development outside the defined shopping centres where such uses would only be permitted in limited locations. Subject to Policy S4, retail development may be permitted at the edge of a defined shopping centre or in an area accessible by a choice of means of transport. Indeed, the application site is relatively close to Barnsley town centre and just outside the defined town centre boundary on the Proposals Map of the UDP. Paragraph 5.25 of the UDP states that it is relevant to differentiate between convenience goods offered to a localised area rather than a wider area. The medical products which would be dispensed would be closely associated with the patients and work of the adjoining medical and dentistry practices. Therefore, the pharmacy is unlikely to attract much car borne traffic from customers not associated with the onsite practices and in any case as Cohens Chemists operate a collection and delivery service for prescriptions this would assist in deterring car usage.

4. *CONCLUSION*

4.1 The decision to grant a pharmacy licence is for the Primary Care Trust to make as they have local knowledge, expertise and understand the needs of the patients in the locality. The PCT also looks at how convenient it is for patients to access pharmaceutical services before deciding to grant the pharmacy licence as well as considering the medical services to be provided in that locality. Where there are new Primary Care Centres being built, the Government is keen to see a one-stop approach to healthcare which involves a pharmacy within the larger medical centres. However, although the existing dispensary on Summer Lane is within walking distance of the medical centre, it is not that convenient for patients if they are elderly, feeling ill or have a disability as they need to walk down the hill to the existing shop and return uphill if they live in that direction or need to collect a car from the car park. The transference of the dispensary to No. 3 Victoria Crescent West would therefore support the one stop approach to healthcare and the Government's objectives of promoting sustainable and inclusive patterns of retail development.

4.2 Moreover, neither would the proposed pharmacy conflict with Policies S1, S3 or S4 of the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan as it would not harm the shopping hierarchy. Indeed, the introduction of the proposed pharmacy on to this site would be an invaluable and convenient facility for the patients of the adjacent healthcare practices.