**APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE AND**

**ASSOCIATED ALTERATIONS**

**At**

**317 HOUGH LANE**

**WOMBWELL**

**BARNSLEY**

**S73 0LR**

**For**

**WHITE CROSS PODIATRY**

**SEQUENTIAL TEST**

**Prepared by**

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**1. BACKGROUND**

A full planning application has been submitted for the change of use from a domestic garage to a small clinic and storage facility for the business that is currently run by the owners of the property.

The current business that the residents have is a Domiciliary Podiatry business that covers all Barnsley and surrounding areas. The podiatrist visits patients within their own home and offers a thorough Podiatry service there. White Cross Podiatry is run by Jon Winstanley, the podiatrist, and his wife Philippa Winstanley, who is the business manager and part-time trainee podiatry assistant. They also work together in local Care homes offering podiatry services to all residents.

This is a business that has been trading for over 15yrs and has a loyal client base. In addition to the home visits and care home services, prior to Covid, they ran a weekly clinic at a local NHS GP surgery, but this was closed to them in 2019 and the GP still is not enabling them to work in their premises again.

It is this ‘clinic’ service that they are looking to re-offer to their patients as an alternative to home visits. Some of the patients that they saw in the GP surgery have had them as a home visiting service, but some do not like to have people coming to their homes, so have stopped accessing their services. It would also give patients an option of accessing a service at a reduced rate, as home visits do have an obvious fee increase to cover fuel and convenience to the patient. During this current financial climate, the clients feel it is something that they would like to offer patients as an alternative to home visits, as they realise the impact of the economy is having on everyone.

As the podiatrist works part-time for the NHS, they would not be able to offer a full week of clinic appointments, plus, the domiciliary service would still be available as a large majority of their patients are over the age of 80yrs and would not be able to access the clinic themselves. We would not want to stop the home visits for our older patients. If the clinic was situated on the podiatrist’s home premises, then they would be able to offer clinic appointments around his NHS and domiciliary work without this having too much impact on his home life.

This location would also eliminate the need for rental fees, therefore enabling the patients to benefit from a lower fee, as rental charges would not have to be passed onto the paying patient.

An additional important factor that the clients must consider is the comfort and ease of access for the patients that they will be seeing. As a service, most of the patients seen by a podiatrist are of non-working age (retired). They often have mobility issues and need care and support when accessing appointments for their healthcare. It is for this reason, that the clients felt an out-of-town premises would be better suited to the patient base that they would be working with.

Many patients have cognitive impairments, and a busy town centre environment could cause more stress, not only for the patient, but for the carer or family member that may be supporting the patient at their appointments. The clients felt that, if they could offer a small, calm, welcoming environment, where they would be the only person being seen at that time, where they could park as close as possible, then the patients would be happier to attend.

Client feels there is no specific requirement for a part time clinic to be in a town centre/high street location.

2. **AVAILABLE COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES**

A search of commercial premises for rent in the town centre area using Rightmove and Zoopla are identified as the following:

* Vaping Strikes Back, Retail premises, Station Road, Wombwell S73

Assessment: this is based on a road where there is a single yellow line, so parking restrictions are in place at certain times. There is a public car park situated further up the road from the premises, but to an elderly patient with mobility issues, it would be a challenge to get to the clinic if it was based here.

* Fish & Chip Shop, High Street, Wombwell, S73.

Assessment: this is already set up at a catering establishment and would be unsuitable for a health care clinic. A costly refurbishment would be required. It is also situated on the main road of the town centre and there is a no parking policy in place. The main car park for the town centre is situated on George Street, up a very steep hill, about a 5 min walk for a fit and active person. This would not be suitable for the patients we would be seeing.

* 1st & 2nd Floor above Vesta Continental Store, High Street, Wombwell, S73

Assessment: this property is set above a retail property within the main town centre street. Access would be via stairs, and this is not suitable for the patients that would be accessing the clinic. No parking is available outside the property and an extensive refurbishment would be needed at great cost to ensure a sterile clinical environment was established.

* RSPCA Charity Shop (previously Barclays Bank PLC), 45 High St, Wombwell, S73

Assessment: Again, based on the main street with no parking available. This property is also far too large for the one, part-time clinic that our client is proposing. A large, expensive refurbishment would be required to get this up to the health and safety guidelines required for a podiatry clinic.

* Other premises in the close vicinity and surrounding areas are too large for the proposed requirement of the client. Industrial units are too large and other old banks and building society buildings would be too large and need too large an investment for our clients.

3. **CONCLUSION**

When considering the reasons for wanting to open a clinic on the client’s premises, plus the fact that this is going to be a small development to an already established small business, commercial lettings don’t fit with the proposal. As a family, the clients have worked for 15yrs building up a small, part time private podiatry business, that over the years has taken several hits, mainly due to the pandemic.

They have been unable to offer the services they once did, due to restrictions during the pandemic and the limitations that the NHS had and do still have.

They are looking to offer an addition to their home visiting business to those patients who prefer to come to a clinic setting, but without compromising the domiciliary service that they already offer.

This limitation to the hours and days that they can offer as a clinic, due to their other commitments (Private home visits and NHS work) suited them much better if their own premises could be adapted.

Using a commercial space within a town centre, that will be closed for a large part of the week, didn’t seem viable to the clients. A closed premises does not look appealing to a local town centre.