

Easton House, Glossop
Design & Access Statement
16th September 2008

Background

The site, the former home of Lord Doverdale, is situated at the easterly edge of High Street East, Glossop. Its prominent location on the edge of the Council's Central Regeneration Area was once the residence for the local mill owner with it's most recent occupation by E&R Polymers, who leased the building and used it as office space up until about 4 years ago. Following this there has been a considerable vacancy period in which the building has suffered at the hands of the elements. Now riddled with damp and structural problems, not to mention some recent burglary damage, this suffering building is in need of renovation, new occupancy and new lease of life.



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Proposal

It is important that the new occupancy for the building reflects and respects the stature of the existing building and in doing so, both should benefit from each other. This application details the use of the building as a new doctor's surgery for the expanding local population and demands of the Glossop community. The object of this proposal is to maintain the existing building facade whilst modernise the interior so that the building will be around for future generations. The conversion of the existing building into a range of local health facilities including GP rooms, nurse station and pharmacy should provide the necessary services which the local community needs now and will require more so in the near future.

The conversion of the coach house at the rear of the site into office space and meeting rooms for the main surgery and third party use allows the main building to be dedicated to the public and social use of the surgery.

With both of these renovation proposals will come a modernising of the sites landscaping, which has become overgrown and wild without the necessary horticultural treatment. The addition of considerable but necessary car parking will also alter the appearance but its position has taken into consideration the most mature of the trees on site and preserves the character of the immediate landscape.



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Materiality

1.1 To match the energy reductions required now and well into the future the building needs to be brought up to current standards well beyond its current state, which should aid in the considerable reduction of the carbon footprint of the building and its day to day environmental costs. To do this whilst maintaining the external materiality of the building results in a complete re-design of the interior.

1.2 The changes to the existing external appearance will be limited to repairs to the stone work where necessary along with their cleaning. Given that the existing windows don't achieve current building regulation standards for energy efficiency and also suffer from severe decomposition, these will be replaced with glazing which will provide excellent energy ratings but also tie in with the style of the building.

1.3 The internals of the building are unsuitable for any modern business given that they are dated and provide a limited special organisation. They also continue the considerable dilapidation existing through the building. A new internal structure would re-vitalise the building and also provide a flexible internal layout which would be suitable for future occupation by a range of other businesses, not just that proposed within this application.

1.4 The external ground treatment will be two fold. Initially the cobbles which exist on the site, the majority of which exist at the rear of the site around the coach house, are not suitable as a surface material in their current state and will need to be either cleaned and re-laid, or replaced, depending on their finished state. To tie in with the existing materials and to aid in the natural drainage of the site, into the mill pond, pavers will be used to follow the existing patterns. This should form a durable surface with limited maintenance which reflects, but does not seek to match exactly, the materials which exist on the site currently.

1.5 The building suffers from environmental damage due to, in part, the state of the existing roof structure. With the addition of the new interior a new roof is required to make the building water tight. The roof would match the existing slate roof which can be found locally and will again improve the environmental performance of the building as a whole.

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Context

2.1 The sites position on High Street East makes it an ideal location for the proposed medical centre. In conjunction with the location there is demand for the services proposed, hence the ideal opportunity for a medium sized investment, both for employment and social community facilities.

2.2 The sites pivotal role between the large residential areas to the East and West, its proximity to the town centre and access to Old Glossop enables it to serve a wide local community without the need for considerable travel distances for local people or increased highways provision, which would be necessary with a totally new development.

2.3 To achieve the necessary vision splays from the entrance to the site some of the existing boundary wall will have to be re-positioned along with the replacement of the railings which exist further up the boundary line. This should have the effect of providing the building with a grander entrance and further establish the building as a landmark on the street scene. This is in accordance with recommendations from the Highways Authority.



2.4 With the town centre location and the proposal for the new medical centre, car parking is going to be an important requirement. As a result the existing car park, at the front of the site, has been extended in addition to some organisation and supplementation of the existing parking between the main building and the coach house. The new car park will result in the inevitable removal some trees which exist but will result in a reduction of off-site parking.

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All parking will be shielded from the road and residential property by the remodelled boundary wall and new planting, to supplement the removed self-seeded and rotten trees. Refer to the Tree Assessment.

2.5 The entrance and exit to and from the site should allow both public and service access to the site with the loading section of the proposal being positioned away from the main public entrance to avoid any conflict.

Access

3.1 Approach – Ramped or lift access from the external ground level will be provided in line with Approved Document M. Approach to be 1:60 and 1:20 gradient. Major access points will also be sufficiently covered so to provide clean footings.

3.2 Parking – Parking will be provide with the extension of the existing areas found at the front of the building along with clear demarcation of the area to the rear adjacent to the coach house. This should provide ample parking provision for both employees and surgery visitors.

3.3 Entrances – All entrances are to be clearly signposted from both vehicular and pedestrian approach. Door entry systems will be accessible to the physically impaired. Any surface used in the approach to and including the entrance will not impede wheelchair movement. All manually operating doors are to have an opening force no greater than 30N. Glazed entrance doors should have sufficient and correctly positioned manifestation to comply with approved document N.

3.4 Horizontal Circulation – All accessible areas within the ground floor should be so designed to allow wheelchair movement and manoeuvres along with the ability for people to pass unhindered. Corridor and door widths to comply with approved document M. Floor surfaces, internal and external where appropriate, should be slip resistant.

3.5 Vertical Circulation – Flights between landings on the new staircase are not to exceed ten risers with the rise of each step to be no more that 170mm with a going distance of at least 250mm. Provision should be made for handrails to meet guidelines within approved document M.

3.6 Access to Services – Access to ground floor WC's should be sign posted within the internal spaces with access off the main circulation space for ease of access. All WC's within the building are to comply with the relevant building regulations.

3.7 Emergency Egress – All emergency egress routes should comply with approved document B.

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Policy

The relevant policies which hold relevance for this proposal and the site are as follows;

1: GD3 – Improvement Corridors – The site exists within an improvement corridor and given the nature of the proposal, to reinstate an existing building without the removal of key external features, would imply that the alterations would be supported and strengthen the application.

2: EMP6 – Industry & Business within the built-up area boundaries & home-working. – Given the proximity to the town centre of the site, and the buildings previous use as an office building, the proposed new use would continue the existing Business use and would be backed by this policy.

3: BC1 – External Materials – Given that the proposal seeks to maintain and repair the existing vernacular architecture on the site, external materials will match the local sourced stone and hence this policy will be satisfied.

4: BC2 – Shop Fronts – Within the proposal there is a pharmacy included. This will require access to High Street East and include retail frontage as a result. This policy enables frontage in this location and will enable direct on street entrances for the public.

NOTE: No conservation area consent is required as no demolition of the existing building is required, as demolition stands as complete removal of the existing building. This is not the case as the proposed only details the internals to be removed.

Supporting Documents

Ref: Derbyshire Council; Meeting of Cabinet Members (23/02/07)

The following extract is taken from the aforementioned document and details where this proposal is supported and further substantiated by regional and local planning policy.

The AAP was guided by the following objectives;

- introduce a viable mix of uses
- provide high quality business space
- raise the profile of Glossop

Its core elements include

- New or expanded health and fitness centre.
- The opportunity for new offices to be introduced into the main mixed use zone.
- The consolidation of supported business activity in Easton House.

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Summary

To improve the building and the site in which it sits, a bold and innovative proposal is needed, one which will enable the building to continue as a historic feature within the community for many years to come. With the current pressure on existing facilities and a population constantly seeking improved facilities and the most modern treatments available, there is a necessary demand which exists for a new medical practice, as proposed. This site in particular provides an ideal opportunity to serve a large local area without many residents having to travel 'out-of-town' to receive treatment and at the same time ensure that a local building continues to exist and serve a useful role within the community.

The project utilises the best of the existing materials and, with a modern interior inserted within a traditional façade, creates an efficient and flexible building. This development is needed by local residents and an ageing building is in need of rejuvenation, in essence this is a perfect match.

