CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/09472
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Site Inspection:	27th November 2023
Consultation ends:	14th December 2023
Original Target Date:	8th January 2024
Extended Target Date:	12th January 2024
Case officer:	James Repper

Site Address:	Chippenham Community Hospital, 49-51 Rowden Hill, Chippenham, SN15 2AJ
Proposal:	Demolition and relocation of the Physiotherapy Department plus associated remodelling and refurbishment works
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The wider Chippenham Community Hospital site is comprised of a number of large separate buildings that provide various public health services. The site is located on the southern periphery of Chippenham, although is located within the defined settlement boundary, whilst the original buildings are Listed the site is outside of the designated Chippenham Conservation Area as defined by Wiltshire Cores Strategy (WCS) core policies 1 (Settlement Strategy), 2 (Delivery Strategy) and 10 (Spatial Strategy for the Chippenham Community Area). The site is surrounded by a mixture of residential dwellings, and their associated amenity and parking provisions, and open countryside. Some of the nearby dwellings have been subject to alterations and/or extensions over time.

PROPOSAL:

The proposed works are made up of six distinct parts,

1. Replacement Coverings to Pitched Roofs, The proposal is to strip and recover the roof structure, incorporating a modern breathable under felt and fibre cement slate covering to match the existing aesthetic. The existing lead details will be renewed – the intention is to replace all the details and aesthetics of the roof like-for-like while incorporating modern standards of insulation at ceiling level and weathering.

2. Replacement Roof Coverings to Flat Roofs, It is proposed that the existing roof coverings will be overlaid with a product such as built-up mineral felt. Replacement of this element simultaneously with the main roof will ensure the jointing, junctions and abutments are replaced to the same standard, which will ensure longevity, quality of installation and thermal efficiency. It is proposed to thermally insulate the flat roof areas over the consulting/treatment rooms as a warm roof construction. The link corridor areas shall remain uninsulated to maintain the existing clerestory window arrangement and proportions.

3. Remodelling and refurbishment of the Wessex Suite, the creation of five consulting rooms, a reception area and additional ancillary spaces including storerooms, sluice and staff welfare. The external walls to the new Wessex Suite are to be retained as part of the works. Low-level windows that face onto the internal corridor shall be infilled with fire-resisting construction. New partitions shall be of metal frame construction faced with plasterboard.

4. Physiotherapy Treatment Room Adaptations, to provide 7no. Treatment Rooms for outpatient physiotherapy services to replace the 7no. Treatment Bays that shall be lost as a result of the demolition of the Physiotherapy Building. This will include floor finishes replacement and redecoration.

Reconfiguration of the existing meeting room is required to provide 2no. new treatment rooms. As part of this reconfiguration, the existing external door set and side screen will need to be removed and will be replaced with a window to match the existing one adjacent. The area surrounding the new window will be rendered to match the existing aesthetic of this elevation of the building.

5. Physiotherapy Building Demolition, The existing 1970/80's building is to be demolished once the replacement works of part 4 are complete. Following the demolition of the structure it is required to maintain the existing link corridor between the front of the hospital and the In-Patient Wards. It is proposed to construct the new external wall in framed construction and finish the external walls with a render system and incorporate windows and fenestration to match the adjacent 1980s ward block in appearance.

6. Boiler Replacement Works, The existing boilers, ancillary equipment and controls require replacement. All pipework, controls and ancillary equipment pertaining to the heating system contained within the plant room will be removed and replaced. The existing hot water calorifiers are to be serviced and chemically cleaned but will be retained.

The application includes all associated works to facilitate the above.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
14/03154/LBC – Replacement Boiler House Roof and Associated Works (approved)
14/02738/FUL – Replacement Boiler House Roof and Associated Works (approved)
PL/2021/10943 - Conservatory replacement and new roof void access within listed building (approved)
PL/2021/10943 - Conservatory replacement and new roof void access within listed building (approved)

POLICIES:
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Design Guidance (Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places) 2019

Salisbury District Local Plan policies (Saved by Wiltshire Core Strategy):
S16 (Decisions on Application)
S66 (Special Considerations Affecting Planning Functions)
S72 (General Duties of Planning Authorities)

Wiltshire Core Strategy:
CP1 (Settlement Strategy)
CP2 (Delivery Strategy)
CP10 (Spatial Strategy for the Chippenham Community Area)
CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping)
CP58 (Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment)

REPRESENTATIONS:

Conservation – No Objection

- The Hospital is included in the statutory list due to its origins as a workhouse that was later adapted and extended to serve as a community hospital. As with many hospitals, the original buildings have been adapted and extended during the twentieth and early twenty-first century in an ad hoc fashion and lack of cohesive design.

The proposals concern the removal of a modern structure which has neither architectural nor historic merit.

The proposed internal reconfiguration concerns a modern floor plan the remnants of the earlier 19th-century arrangement would be unaffected by the proposed changes and thus the significance of the building would be unaffected by the works.

The external works for the most part a minor and thus are considered to preserve the architectural values of the building as a heritage asset.

The impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the applications.

Chippenham Council – No Objection

- The Town Council supports this application. However, it requests that more environmentally friendly alternatives to new gas boilers/gas supply be investigated e.g. heat pumps, PV panels on flat roofs etc.

Letters – None Received

ISSUES:

The main considerations which are material to the determination of this application are listed below:

- Principle
- Character & Design
- Neighbouring Amenities

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

Principle:

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, the WCS, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within a mixed residential area within the Market Town of Chippenham. Core Policies 1 and 2 of the WCS set out a settlement and a delivery strategy for the town and confirm that within a Market Town, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Furthermore, the site is already in use for its existing commercial purposes and the principle of extensions or additions to be used in association with the existing use of the site is accepted. This principle acceptability is however subject to the detail, such as its implications for the character of the area and neighbouring amenities. These will, therefore, be addressed in more detail below.

Character & Design:

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires ‘special regard’ to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting. In addition, Section 72 of the Act states that in the exercise of any functions, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. In having ‘special regard’ (in relation to listed buildings) and/or in paying ‘special attention’ (in relation to conservation areas) the NPPF states that regard must be had as to whether the proposal will cause ‘substantial harm’, ‘less than substantial harm’ or no harm to the asset. Section 16 of the act relates to the granting of Listed Building Consent specifically stating that the local planning authority may grant or refuse an application for listed building consent and, if they grant consent, may grant it subject to conditions. In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features

of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and any listed building consent shall (except in so far as it otherwise provides) enure for the benefit of the building and of all persons for the time being interested in it.

Core Policy 57 states that new development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Residential extensions/alterations such as this are acceptable in principle subject to there being no adverse impacts. Core Policy 58 aims to ensure that Wiltshire's heritage assets such as the conservation area are protected and enhanced in order that they continue to make an important contribution to Wiltshire's environment and quality of life. It also, however, confirms that the designation of a Conservation Area or listed building does not necessarily preclude the possibility of new development and the Council is committed to working pragmatically with owners to find positive solutions which will allow adaptation of such buildings to reflect modern living aspirations.

Good design helps to provide a sense of place, creates or reinforces local distinctiveness, and promotes community cohesiveness and social wellbeing; The layout and design of new developments must also be based on a thorough understanding of the site itself and its wider context, and seek to maximise the benefits of the site's characteristics. This will require careful consideration of the site layout. No two sites share the same landscapes, contours, relationship with surrounding buildings, street pattern and features. The proximity of poor quality or indistinct development is not a justification for standard or poor design solutions. New development should integrate into its surroundings whilst seeking to enhance the overall character of the locality; A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings.

In this instance, the proposed works are considered to be relatively minor and primarily relate to modern sections of the buildings which have limited impact on the character of the building as a whole. As stated by the conservation officer the proposed works would preserve the existing character of the site and cause no harm, this is concluded having given special regard to preserving both the character and the setting of the site. Due to the arrangement of the current buildings, the external works of the application are considered to be contained within the site and will have virtually no effect on the street scene or the character of the surrounding area. Overall, it is, therefore, considered that the proposed works are of an acceptable scale, mass, design and detail to maintain the character of the application site, would not be detrimental to the street scene and would have no impact on the character of the wider area.

Neighbouring Amenities:
WCS policy CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping) requires that development should ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself. The NPPF includes that planning should "*always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings"*. Residential amenity is affected by significant changes to the environment including privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and living areas within private gardens and this, therefore, needs to be carefully considered accordingly.

Due to the location of the external works within the site and the distances from the boundaries and locations of neighbouring dwellings, it is considered that the works would have no tangible effect on amenity spaces available for the enjoyment of local residents.

Protected Species:
Due to the age and location of the property combined with the works proposed it was deemed appropriate to conduct a bat survey to confirm whether the works would affect roosting or commuting bats. The survey has concluded, " It is therefore considered unlikely that the proposed demolition or renovations would have any impacts on bats or their roosts." In light of this report, it is considered appropriate to merely add an informative to any permission reminding the applicants of their responsibilities moving forward.

CONCLUSION:
The proposal would be of an acceptable overall scale and would result in limited implications for the character of the application site or street scene and is adjudged to cause no harm to the Listed Building. Similarly, due to its location and scale, it is considered that the proposal would be unlikely to have a significant impact on the amenities enjoyed by occupiers of adjacent dwellings.

The proposal would, therefore, accord with the aims and objectives of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and other Government guidance and is recommended that planning permission be granted for the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:
Approve subject to the following conditions

Conditions: (3)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Application Form & Certificate Received 1st November 2023
Plans Ref:
Location Plan DWG: 220572 1001 Received 13th November 2023
Site Plan DWG: 220572 1002 Received 1st November 2023
Works Plan DWG: 220572 1003 Received 1st November 2023
Demolition Works - Existing and Proposed Elevations DWG: 220572 1012 Received 1st November 2023
Demolition Works - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans DWG: 220572 1011 Received 1st November 2023
Existing and Proposed Wessex Suite Elevations DWG: 220572 1008 Received 1st November 2023
Existing and Proposed Wessex Suite Floor Plans DWG: 220572 1007 Received 1st November 2023
Existing and Proposed Physio Consulting Elevations DWG: 220572 1010 Received 1st November 2023
Existing and Proposed Physio Consulting Floor Plans DWG: 220572 1009 Received 1st November 2023
Proposed Elevations DWG: 220572 1005 Received 1st November 2023
Roof Replacement Works Plan DWG: 220572 1006 Received 1st November 2023
Bat Survey Report, Davidson-watts Ecology Ltd, 21st September 2023 Received 1st November 2023
Design, Access and Heritage Statement, Kendall Kingscott DOC: 220572 Received 1st November 2023

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture of those detailed on the application form and approved drawings.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

Informatives: (1)

4 There is a low risk that bats may occur at the development site. Many species of bat depend on buildings for roosting, with each having its own preferred type of roost. Most species roost in crevices such as under ridge tiles, behind roofing felt or in cavity walls and are therefore not often seen in the roof space. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 even when bats are temporarily absent because, being creatures of habit, they usually return to the same roost site every year. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the applicant is advised to follow the advice of a professional ecologist or to contact Natural England's Batline through the internet.