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Ms S Lambert
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Dear Sam

Proposed alterations to Willowbrook

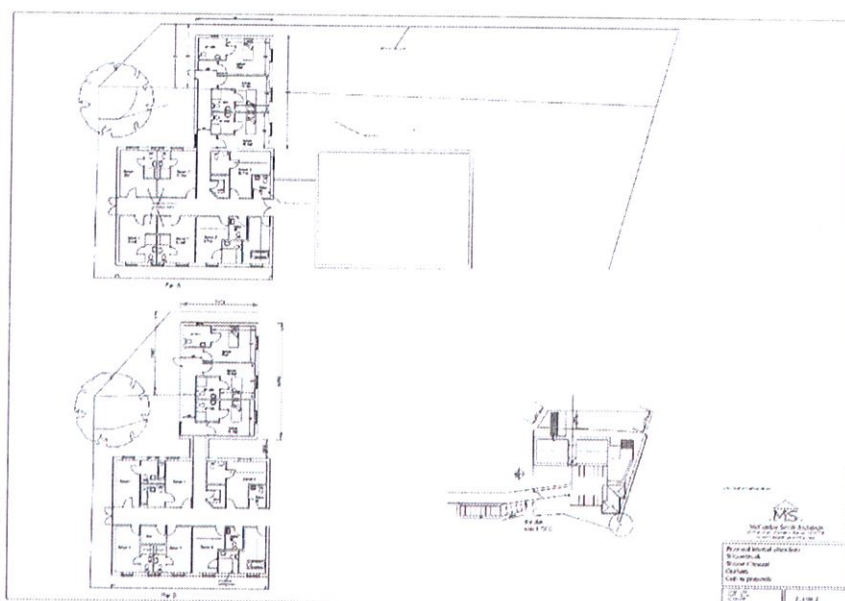
Following the meeting yesterday to discuss the way forward for the project, I have briefly prepared a history of the site development which I think may be of value to justify the current proposal.

The original Willowbrook House was developed in the 1980's by RHCT. The house was a simple 2 bay structure designed to have a flexible link in the middle where the building bridged over a main sewer which crosses the site. The original building was orientated north south with mostly east and west facing windows. The building had 8 bedrooms with facilities for 10 residents; 2 of which were shared bedrooms, and one room had a small en-suite.

We first were commissioned by RHCT to look at turning the shared bedrooms into single occupancy rooms as the national standards had changed and sharing bedrooms was no longer encouraged. In 1998 plans were drawn up for the 4 northerly rooms to be changed to 6 single rooms. This work was completed the following year.

The next project was to replace temporary office accommodation on the site with a new office and family centre. The designs were prepared in 2000 with completion of the building work in 2006. This is the building at the front of the Willowbrook house; it has subsequently been converted into 2 supported living apartments.

By 2008 we again looked at the plans for RHCT as the standards were again changing, with a requirement for all rooms to have en-suites. At this time we prepared sketch plans for a conversion plus extension to achieve this. In this instance 2 sets of 3 rooms were changed into 2 rooms plus 2 en-suites. A further bedroom was lost to provide a further en-suite and an access route to the extension. This left a requirement for an extension to provide a further 3 new rooms plus 3 en-suites.



At this time RHCT approached the town council when Richard White was clerk with a view to obtaining additional land to provide space for the updating. (see plan 514/08/2 above). The town council at this time made the decision to offer the whole of the adjacent field to RHCT. This land was thus obtained with the sole purpose of extending as and when RHCT were ready and had the money to extend.

In the mean time the land was used as additional amenity land for Willowbrook.

As the existing building has become increasingly out dated, especially with the lack of en-suites and an inappropriate heating system, RHCT have again looked at resolving this problem and have prepared plans to replace the care home with an 8 room new build on the “amenity” land. As the existing building is the permanent home for the residents, it is now seen to be simpler and safer to build a new structure, rather than try to convert and adapt the existing building. This then leaves the existing building to be fully renovated to create 7 independent apartments for people in crisis in Rutland. This is a facility much needed in Rutland as there is currently no such accommodation available in the county.

The existing sewer crossing the site continues to be a major constraint on the design of the new building, with all building work needing to be one side or other as building over will not be acceptable to the water authority. The footprint is thus located on the larger area of land to the south of the sewer.

The new building has all the bedrooms on the ground floor with full height windows to each room. Each room has an en-suite, with 3 en-suites oversized to facilitate residents with physical disabilities as well as learning difficulties. On the ground floor is a dining room plus two separate sitting rooms, all with south and west daylight to create a more domestic scale of accommodation. This will be a distinct improvement over the existing rather institutional combined sitting room and dining room in

the present house. Upstairs there is provision for an in-house laundry, a bedroom for sleeping night staff plus office accommodation for RHCT. A lift is provided so that everything is fully accessible.

The new building has been located to the east of the existing Willowbrook House, on the adjacent flat land, with a new vehicular access going round the south side of the existing house. As 3 parking spaces have been lost to achieve the access, it has been proposed to replace these parking spaces and to provide a further 5 spaces to accommodate the increase in use on site. Of the additional 5 spaces, 2 had been proposed to be disabled spaces, located by the new front door. The Building Regulations Part M have a number of clauses that need to be adhered to as follows:

Part M of the building regulations (Access to and use of buildings):

M1.17: People with mobility impairments who arrive as passengers should be able to alight from a vehicle close to the principle entrance of the building in a way that is convenient for entry into the building

M1.18: Car parking and setting down will satisfy Requirement M1 or M2 if

- a: at least one parking bay designated for disabled people is provided on firm and level ground as close as feasible to the principle entrance of the building*
- c: the surface of the accessibility zone is firm, durable and slip resistant, with undulations not exceeding 3mm under a 1m straight edge for formless materials. Inappropriate materials might be loose sand or gravel.*
- d: a clearly sign posted setting down point is located on firm and level ground as close as practicable to the principle entrance with its surface level with the carriageway at that point to allow convenient access to and from the entrance for people with walking difficulties or people using a wheelchair.*

In view of the concerns of the Town Council, 1 disabled parking bay has been omitted from the plans; this reduces the disabled parking to the minimum required under part M. 3 parking bays are required to replace the 3 parking bays that have been lost by the development P1-P3. It is beneficial to then retain the additional 3 parking bays to allow for the increased use on the site, P4-P6, and if omitted are likely to create further parking issues elsewhere.

It has been suggested that grasscrete surface be used for the new driveway. Given that the use of the building is for people with both learning and physical disabilities this would not be a suitable surface for their use. However if a block paving surface is used this will be suitable for all pedestrian users and will provide a quiet surface for traffic use.

Under part B of the building regulation (Fire) there is a requirement for a fire pump to gain access to the building, to within 45m of the further corner of the building. The 45m distances have been marked on the plan as shown, resulting in a requirement for a vehicular access to the front of the new building as designed. The loading for a fire pump should be a minimum of 13.3tonnes. The roadway width must be a minimum of 3.7m

In view of this the driveway access has been reduced from the 4.25m width as approved by the planning application to the 3.7m minimum required under Part B. This will make access quite tight but will ensure that speeds are exceedingly slow.

A further issue that has been raised is that of amenity space on the site. It is noted that before the additional land was rented by RHCT, the overall amenity space on site was 724m². For the 10 residents this worked out at 72.4m² amenity space per person. With the new development plus the conversion of the old building, the proposed amenity space increases to 1877m², which is 125m² per person. In comparison an average modern family back garden on a modern development may provide a back garden space of approximately 10 x 8m for a 3 bedroom house, and in further comparison, the amenity space per person for the new McCarthy and Stone Development in Barleythorpe is approximately 60m² per person. The amenity space as proposed is shown thus to be more generous Than many other modern developments.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Karen Mellor

