

Refurbishment Webinar 22.7.26.

Meeting Summary

A community consultation meeting was held to discuss the planned refurbishment of The Avenue Surgery. The practice has experienced significant growth in patient numbers over the last 5-10 years, necessitating an expansion of the premises. Planning permission has been granted for a ground floor extension and a loft conversion. An application for an outbuilding at the rear of the property was declined but will be reconsidered with modifications. During the build, the surgery plans a temporary relocation to West Ealing Pharmacy. Key concerns raised by community members included security, parking, preservation of a magnolia tree and a World War II air raid shelter, and the potential impact of construction on a neighbouring property with subsidence issues. The practice outlined its plans to address these concerns and committed to ongoing communication with the community.

Attendees

Dr. Andrew Dharman (GP Partner)
JB (Operations Manager)
LD (HCA/Cleaning)
Community Members

Meeting Minutes

Dr. Andrew Dharman opened the meeting, providing background on the surgery's history, its growth from 3,000 patients to a larger list size, and the commitment to maintaining high quality, personal, patient-centred care. The need for increased capacity due to this growth and local practice closures was explained.

The refurbishment plan consists of three parts: a ground floor extension, a loft conversion, and a rear outbuilding. Planning permission has been granted for the extension and loft conversion but was declined for the outbuilding. Computer-generated images of the proposed changes were presented.

An open floor discussion followed, where community members raised several concerns:

- Security: Concerns were raised about the security of the open garden and proposed rear building. Dr. Dharman confirmed the existing CCTV system would be expanded and all new doors and windows would have modern, secure locks.
- Parking: Loss of garage parking was noted as a concern. The practice's plan is to encourage staff to use alternative parking on less congested nearby roads, like Bradley Gardens, and to continue using existing parking permits.
- Tree Preservation: A community member expressed a wish to preserve a large magnolia tree in the garden. Dr. Dharman stated the practice is pro-green space and will investigate options to keep the tree, which may involve using different foundations for the outbuilding.

- Neighbour Impact: A direct neighbour raised concerns about the proposed outbuilding, citing it as overbearing, causing loss of light, and potentially exacerbating a significant, pre-existing subsidence issue with his property.
- Loss of Green Space: Concerns were noted about the garden size being reduced by a large patio area and the proposed outbuilding.
- Historical Preservation: The presence of a World War II air raid shelter in the garden was highlighted as a point of historical interest that should be preserved. Dr. Dharman mentioned they are exploring the possibility of having it professionally excavated and preserved.

Dr. Dharman addressed the feedback on the outbuilding, noting the application was currently refused and that all community feedback, particularly regarding subsidence, height, and aesthetics, would be considered in any future modified application.

The practice's plan for a temporary relocation to the nearby West Ealing Pharmacy during the building works was detailed. The expected build time is approximately 6-9 months, with a target start in the next 3-6 months, pending the finalisation of legal paperwork with the ICB.

Action Items

- Finalise and sign legal paperwork with the ICB to confirm the practice's long-term commitment (timeline: 6-8 weeks).
- Draw up plans for temporary clinical rooms at the West Ealing Pharmacy location.
- Re-evaluate and potentially resubmit the planning application for the outbuilding with modifications to address neighbour concerns regarding height, light, subsidence, and aesthetics.
- Consult with architects and builders regarding foundation options to preserve the magnolia tree.
- Investigate options for preserving or excavating the World War II air raid shelter, possibly in consultation with a national museum.
- Expand the surgery's security and CCTV system to cover the garden and any new structures.
- Formally encourage staff who drive to park on Bradley Gardens or other less congested streets to minimise local parking impact.
- Ensure new clinical rooms are fitted with adjustable height couches for improved accessibility.
- Maintain regular communication with the community through future meetings and the Patient Participation Group (PPG).

Key Decisions

Planning permission has been secured for the ground floor extension and loft conversion, allowing the main refurbishment to proceed. The practice will temporarily relocate to West Ealing Pharmacy to minimise disruption and expedite the construction, which is estimated to take 6-9 months. The initial application for the rear outbuilding was declined, and no work will proceed on it at this time;

community feedback will be integral to any future proposals for this part of the project.

Next Steps

The immediate next step is the signing of legal agreements with the ICB, expected within 6-8 weeks. Concurrently, plans for the temporary surgery at West Ealing Pharmacy will be developed and implemented. The practice aims to begin the main refurbishment project in 3-6 months. Ongoing dialogue with the community will be maintained via PPG meetings and direct contact, with residents encouraged to email any further questions or concerns to admin.theavenue.net.

Post-Meeting Reflections

The meeting was well received by the attendees. Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide feedback and for the transparency of the practice. The concerns raised by the community members were handled constructively, fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere for the project moving forward.

