

Extension plan for dental practice refused

The Comely Bank dental practice was denied permission for an extension to provide an extra treatment room, due to the impact on the historic nature of the building.

An Edinburgh dental clinic has been refused permission to build an extension to meet “increased demand” for appointments. Comely Bank Dental’s application to expand was thrown out by planners due to the impact on the building’s “historic interest” and local conservation area.

The private Stockbridge practice sought approval to add a fifth treatment room and office on the ground floor to help manage a “backlog of patients”.

A severe lack of appointments available with NHS dentists across the UK is forcing more people to go private or even resort to ‘DIY dentistry’.

In Edinburgh, only around a quarter of dentists across the city offering NHS services are accepting adult patients, it was reported last year. Meanwhile the number of NHS dental claims in the NHS Lothian area reduced from 958,000 in 2019 to just 555,678 between January and November 2022.

Documents submitted with the planning application said the Comely Bank Road clinic hoped to “grow the practice” and begin offering treatment options to NHS patients and “increase NHS provision for children – an area the practice feels strongly about given the poor level of care currently available in this area locally and nationwide”.

It said the impact of the pandemic was also “still being felt

as dental practices work to address the backlog and restore services to pre-pandemic levels”.

It added: “The postponement of routine appointments and treatments created a backlog of patients awaiting care, putting additional pressure on dental practices to manage the increased demand.

“Even as services resumed, dental practices continue to face financial pressures due to the need to address the backlog of patients while adhering to ongoing infection control measures and increased operational costs. Rapidly increasing interest rates for loans and supporting staff with increased wages due to their cost of living increase.”

However, refusing planning permission council officers said the proposals “fail to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building” and would “adversely impact on its special architectural and historic interest”.

They said the extension would also “fail to preserve the character of the conservation area”.

They added: “An extension of this size, in relation to the available garden ground linked to the property, is out of character with the area as a whole.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter



Comely Bank Dental. Image: WORKP13CE LTD