October 2026

GA

ACUMEN
Designers & Architects

SEQUENTIAL TEST

Proposed Change of Use from Dwelling to Dental Practice

970 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield, West Yorkshire, WF14 9HS

Applicant	Acumen
Site	970 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield, WF14 9HS
Document	Sequential Test
Date	26 October 2026

Job Ref: 3007

Headrow House, Old Leeds Road, Huddersfield HD1 1SG Tel: 01484 546000

1. Executive Summary

This Sequential Test has been prepared to support a planning application for the change of use of the existing dwelling at 970 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield to a small dental practice. The proposal is intended to provide a local dental service in the Mirfield area and is modest in scale.

The proposed plans show a single-chair treatment room, separate hygienist room, decontamination room, reception and waiting space, staff room, office, WCs, storage and waste accommodation. The proposed site plan also provides one disabled parking space, two staff spaces and three visitor spaces, together with an external platform lift and alterations to the existing gated access to improve accessibility.

National and local planning policy apply a town-centre-first approach to main town centre uses. Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP13 requires main town centre uses outside defined centres to be subject to a sequential test, with the scope reflecting the scale, role and function of the proposal.

A proportionate commercial property search has therefore been undertaken, focusing principally on Mirfield District Centre, which is the nearest defined centre and the centre most closely aligned with the intended catchment of this small local dental practice. A supplementary review of Dewsbury Principal Town Centre has also been undertaken for completeness.

Several marketed premises can be discounted because of inadequate or excessive floorspace or impractical first-floor access. Although 47 Huddersfield Road is centrally located and broadly comparable in floorspace, its suitability for a patient-facing dental practice is materially weakened by its constrained parking provision. Planning documents describe a rear yard accommodating up to three cars, with no demonstrated dedicated accessible bay or sufficient separately allocated spaces for patients and staff. Double yellow line restrictions on Huddersfield Road and Trinity Street limit convenient stopping and parking immediately outside. Patients with reduced mobility may therefore be reliant on a limited rear yard or more distant public parking, with uncertain step-free routes to the entrance. These are practical disadvantages for scheduled appointments, including patients who require close and convenient access.

By contrast, 970 Huddersfield Road proposes six on-site spaces, including a dedicated disabled bay, together with an external platform lift. On a proportionate assessment, No. 47 is a substantially less convincing operational alternative, notwithstanding its town-centre location. Its final availability, realistic capacity to allocate compliant accessible parking, and ability to accommodate the clinical layout should nevertheless be verified before treating it as formally discounted.

2. Site and Proposed Development

2.1 Existing Site

The application site is 970 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield, WF14 9HS. The existing drawings identify the building as a two-storey dwelling containing domestic accommodation including lounge, dining room, kitchen/store, bedrooms and WCs.

The property occupies a prominent roadside position on Huddersfield Road and is not situated within an otherwise wholly residential street. The immediate context is characterised by established commercial activity and premises around the site, so the proposed dental practice would sit within an existing mixed/commercial setting rather than introducing a business use into a quiet residential enclave. Its frontage to Huddersfield Road also gives the site a clear relationship with a principal through-route, which is appropriate for a small healthcare use requiring convenient access and visibility for patients. Publicly available planning information for the neighbouring Swan petrol station/retail site identifies No. 970 as the closest residential property to that commercial site, further illustrating the mixed-use character of this stretch of Huddersfield Road.

2.2 Proposed Dental Practice

The proposal is for the conversion of the existing dwelling to a dental practice. The proposed accommodation comprises:

- Single-chair treatment room (17 m²);
- Decontamination room (10 m²);
- Reception (5 m²) and waiting room (7 m²);
- Waste store and general storage;
- Hygienist room (15 m²);
- Staff room (16 m²) and office (10 m²);
- WCs at ground and first floor level.

The proposed external works include an external platform lift with a 460 mm rise, steps to the entrance and widening of the existing gated access. The proposed parking layout shows six spaces in total: one disabled space, two staff spaces and three visitor spaces.

2.3 Scale, Role and Function

The development is a small local healthcare/service use rather than a large commercial destination. Its operational model is based around a single-chair treatment room supplemented by a hygienist room, with associated support accommodation. The relevant catchment is therefore primarily Mirfield and its immediate surroundings rather than the wider catchment of a principal town centre.

3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Chapter 8: Ensuring the vitality of town centres, published 29 September 2026, retains the sequential approach for main town centre uses. Policy TC3 states that where a main town centre use requiring planning permission is not within an existing centre and is not in accordance with an up-to-date allocation, a sequential test should be applied.

The sequence is: first, town centre locations; secondly, edge-of-centre locations where a town-centre site is not feasible; and only then out-of-centre locations where suitable sites are not available or expected to become available within a reasonable period. Applicants and local planning authorities are required to exercise flexibility in relation to format and scale so that opportunities to use more central sites are fully explored.

National Planning Practice Guidance also confirms that the sequential test should consider suitability, availability and the contribution that more central sites could make. Particular market or locational requirements may be relevant where robustly justified, but land ownership alone is not sufficient justification for rejecting a more central site.

3.2 Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP13

Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP13 (Town Centre Uses) establishes a hierarchy of centres and requires main town centre uses to be located within defined centres and then in accordance with the sequential test. Mirfield is identified as a District Centre, while Dewsbury is identified as a Principal Town Centre.

The supporting text to Policy LP13 states that the scope of the sequential test should be agreed with the Council and should reflect the scale, role and function of the proposal. Evidence should address the business model and appropriate catchment and provide an audit trail for sequentially preferable sites which have been discounted, supported by robust justification.

4. Sequential Test Methodology

The assessment has been undertaken as a proportionate desk-based search on 26 October 2026. The following approach has been adopted:

- Primary search area: Mirfield District Centre, as the nearest defined centre and the location most closely aligned with the intended local catchment of the practice;
- Secondary/supplementary check: Dewsbury Principal Town Centre, recognising the application site lies between Mirfield and Dewsbury but that the proposal is not intended to operate as a district-wide or principal-centre facility;
- Property types considered: retail, office and other commercial premises capable in principle of accommodating a Class E healthcare/service use, subject to planning and technical requirements;
- Key suitability criteria: sufficient floorspace, ability to provide accessible patient accommodation, practical scope for treatment/decontamination/support spaces, servicing and waste arrangements, and reasonable access for staff and patients;
- Availability: premises actively marketed to let at the search date were treated as potentially available unless contrary evidence was identified.

The assessment does not reject premises simply because they are not identical to the application property. Flexibility has been applied in accordance with national policy. Equally, a site must be capable of accommodating the essential operational requirements of a functioning dental practice rather than merely providing an equivalent headline floor area.

5. Assessment of Sequentially Preferable Sites

Property	Location / size	Key evidence	Assessment	Outcome
47 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield, WF14 8AE	Mirfield District Centre; c.120.4 m² ground floor plus basement; £16,500 pa.	Former bank/office with described DDA access; rear yard reported to accommodate up to three cars. Double yellow lines on Huddersfield Road and Trinity Street restrict frontage parking. Takeaway appeal allowed September 2026; property still marketed.	Material suitability concerns: limited rear yard capacity; no demonstrated dedicated disabled bay or sufficient separate patient/staff parking; restricted nearby kerbside parking; uncertain convenient step-free arrival for disabled patients. Contrast with six on-site spaces, including a disabled bay, at the application site. Confirm actual parking allocation, accessibility, availability and clinical fit.	MATERIALLY CONSTRAINED – DISCOUNTED
Vale Studios, 51-53 Huddersfield Road, WF14 8AB	Mirfield centre; 356.84 m² / 3,841 sq ft; first floor; £390/week.	First-floor former showroom/art studio; dedicated entrance by staircase.	More than three times the required scale and first-floor-only stair access is unsuitable for an accessible patient-facing healthcare use without disproportionate adaptation.	DISCOUNTED
140 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield, WF14 8AN	Approx. 74 m² / 800 sq ft; £1,000 pcm.	Commercial unit with WC and shared parking.	Materially too small for treatment, hygienist, decontamination, reception/waiting, staff/office, WCs, waste and storage even allowing flexibility of format.	DISCOUNTED
The Arcade, Market Place, Dewsbury, WF13	Dewsbury Principal Town Centre; flexible units c.80-1,938 sq ft.	Healthcare listed as a possible use; DDA-compliant building.	Supplementary location outside the primary Mirfield catchment. Some larger space could be suitable in principle; further unit-specific enquiries only if Council requires Dewsbury in the formal search.	SUPPLEMENTARY
Unit 2, Princess of Wales Precinct, Dewsbury, WF13 1NH	Dewsbury Principal Town Centre; 141.21 m² / 1,520 sq ft; £25,000 pa.	Prime pedestrianised retail unit; immediately available.	Floorspace is broadly sufficient but the location serves the Dewsbury principal-centre catchment rather than the intended Mirfield local catchment. Further review only if a wider search area is required.	SUPPLEMENTARY

6. Assessment of the Application Site

The application site is an existing building and the proposal reuses that building without the need to construct a new commercial unit. Its principal locational and operational characteristics are:

- A scale closely matched to the proposed small dental practice;
- Ability to provide separate treatment, hygienist, decontamination, reception/waiting and staff/office accommodation;
- On-site patient and staff parking, including a dedicated disabled bay;
- Direct control over the entrance and external approach, allowing the proposed platform lift and access improvements;
- Space for waste/refuse arrangements within the site;
- A prominent location on Huddersfield Road within the built-up Mirfield/Dewsbury corridor, with the site already surrounded by and closely associated with commercial uses rather than forming part of a predominantly residential street;

The surrounding land-use context is also a material consideration in assessing the suitability of the application site. The proposed use would not represent the encroachment of a commercial operation into an established residential area. Instead, it would reuse an existing building in a location already characterised by commercial activity and direct frontage to a main road. In land-use terms, a small dental practice is therefore compatible with the existing character of the immediate surroundings, while its main-road position assists patient access without relying on movement through quieter residential streets.

The parking and accessibility comparison is particularly relevant to suitability for a small dental practice, including patients with mobility impairments or those requiring assistance. No. 47 has a rear yard described as accommodating up to three vehicles; these spaces are not evidenced as solely available for the proposed practice or capable of providing a dedicated accessible bay alongside adequate patient and staff parking. Double yellow lines on the immediate Huddersfield Road and Trinity Street frontages restrict kerbside parking, and nearby public parking does not necessarily offer the close, predictable and step-free arrival required by all patients. By contrast, the application site provides six proposed on-site spaces, including a dedicated disabled bay and a platform lift. This is not a requirement that every town-centre site replicate the application scheme, but it demonstrates a material operational constraint requiring testing at No. 47.

7. Conclusion

The sequential search demonstrates that the majority of currently marketed Mirfield premises can be discounted on clear suitability grounds, particularly inadequate floorspace or first-floor-only access. The search has also been extended to Dewsbury for completeness, although the intended business model and catchment are primarily local to Mirfield. The application site also benefits from a main-road location within an established mixed/commercial context, rather than a predominantly residential setting, which supports the land-use suitability of a small dental practice at this location.

47 Huddersfield Road is a sequentially preferable town-centre location but its suitability is materially qualified. The reported rear yard has capacity for only up to three cars, with no demonstrated dedicated accessible parking or assured allocation for the dental use. Parking controls, including double yellow lines on the adjacent Huddersfield Road and Trinity Street frontages, constrain convenient on-street stopping. This raises particular concerns for disabled patients and others with reduced mobility, who may need close access and sufficient space to transfer from a vehicle. The Council previously raised parking and highway-safety concerns in relation to a proposed takeaway at this address; that refusal was overturned on appeal in September 2026, so it does not establish that a dental use would be unacceptable. Nevertheless, the dental practice has a different operational profile and a stronger need for predictable patient access.

In view of these constraints, 47 Huddersfield Road should be afforded limited weight as a realistic alternative until evidence demonstrates that it can provide adequate patient/staff parking, appropriate accessible arrangements and a workable clinical layout. The applicant should seek confirmation from the agent or owner regarding availability, any shared or committed rear parking, accessible-bay dimensions and the step-free route to the premises. If these matters cannot be satisfactorily resolved, there is a reasoned basis to discount

it on suitability grounds. The current evidence strengthens the case for 970 Huddersfield Road but is not, by itself, conclusive proof that the sequential test is passed.

If the Council requires the formal sequential search to extend to Dewsbury Principal Town Centre despite the small scale and Mirfield-focused catchment of the proposal, additional unit-specific enquiries should be undertaken before the test is finalised.

8. Sources and Search Record

1. Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies (2019): Policy LP13 and supporting paragraphs 9.7-9.13, Kirklees Council.

2. National Planning Policy Framework (29 September 2026): Chapter 8, Policies TC1-TC4, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

3. Planning Practice Guidance: Town centres and retail: Sequential test guidance, GOV.UK.

4. Kirklees Town Centre Maps: Mirfield District Centre Map DCB11.

5. Rightmove / Holroyd Miller: 47 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield - current office marketing particulars, accessed 26 October 2026.

6. Kirklees planning application 2025/90487 and appeal 6005670: 47 Huddersfield Road - planning statement (rear yard up to three cars), applicant transport evidence (parking restrictions), Council refusal/committee concerns and appeal decision dated 25 September 2026. The appeal was allowed; prior refusal reasons are not presented as an extant finding of unacceptable highway effects.

7. Eddisons / Novaloca: Vale Studios, 51-53 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield - current marketing particulars.

8. Zoopla / L&B Real Estate: 140 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield - current marketing particulars.

9. Rightmove / The Arcade Dewsbury: The Arcade, Dewsbury - current flexible commercial accommodation.

10. FHP / Zoopla: Unit 2, Princess of Wales Precinct, Dewsbury - current marketing particulars.

Appendix A - Drawing Information Reviewed

The following application drawings supplied by the applicant have informed the description of the existing building and proposed dental practice:

- Drawing (100)01 - Existing Floor Plans & Elevations
- Drawing (100)02 - Existing Site Plan
- Drawing (100)03 - Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations
- Drawing (100)04 - Proposed Site Plan

ACUMEN
Designers & Architects

Prepared by Acumen Designers & Architects.
Headrow House, Old Leeds Road, Huddersfield HD1 1SG
Tel: 01484 546000

Written – GA | Checked - JC