

East Area Planning Committee

3rd August 2016

Application Number: 16/00177/FUL

Decision Due by: 29th April 2016

Proposal: Demolition of former Royal Mail Sorting Office (B8) and Vehicle Maintenance Depot (B2) and the redevelopment of the site with the Use Classes B1(c), B2 and B8 and ancillary offices (B1(a)).

Site Address: Royal Mail Sorting Office And Vehicle Maintenance Depot
7000 Alec Issigonis Way (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Lye Valley Ward

Agent: Savills

Applicant: Plumbing Pensions (UK)
Ltd

Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to support the development in principle but defer the application in order to draw up a legal agreement in the terms outlined below, and delegate to officers the issuing of the notice of permission, subject to conditions on its completion for the following reasons:

Reasons for Approval

1. The proposed development would make an efficient use of land within a key protected employment site in a manner that would meet the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework in supporting sustainable economic growth. The siting, layout, external appearance and landscaping of the proposed development would create an appropriate visual relationship with the surrounding area without having a significant impact upon adjoining properties, biodiversity, sustainability, drainage, contaminated land, or local highways and any impact could be successfully dealt with by appropriately worded conditions. The proposal would therefore accord with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, Oxford Core Strategy 2026, and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016
2. In considering the application, officers have had specific regard to the comments of third parties and statutory bodies in relation to the application. However officers consider that these comments have not raised any material considerations that would warrant refusal of the applications, and any harm identified could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions.

3. The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples of materials
- 4 Landscape plan required
- 5 Landscape plan carried out by completion
- 6 Landscape Management Plan
- 7 Tree Protection Plan
- 8 Arboricultural Method Statement
- 9 Construction Traffic Management Plan
- 10 Travel Plan
- 11 Detailed design of access arrangements to the site
- 12 Service and Delivery Management Plan
- 13 Revised parking plan to local plan standard and detailed design of parking areas
- 14 Restriction on use of car parking to occupiers of site
- 15 Details of cycle and refuse storage
- 16 Development carried out in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment
- 17 Detailed Drainage Scheme
- 18 Details of biodiversity enhancements
- 19 Noise restrictions on all mechanical plant on buildings
- 20 Energy Strategy recommendations implemented
- 21 Contaminated Land Risk Assessment
- 22 Site Waste Management Plan
- 23 Details of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Legal Agreement:

- £156,582.00 towards Affordable Housing Provision
- £1,240 towards monitoring fees for the Framework Travel Plan

Principal Planning Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP6 - Efficient Use of Land & Density

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP9 - Creating Successful New Places

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

CP11 - Landscape Design

CP13 - Accessibility

CP14 - Public Art

CP18 - Natural Resource Impact Analysis

CP19 - Nuisance
CP20 - Lighting
CP21 - Noise
CP22 - Contaminated Land
TR1 - Transport Assessment
TR2 - Travel Plans
TR3 - Car Parking Standards
TR4 - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
TR14 - Servicing Arrangements
NE14 - Water and Sewerage Infrastructure
EC1 - Sustainable Employment

Core Strategy

CS2_ - Previously developed and greenfield land
CS9_ - Energy and natural resources
CS10_ - Waste and recycling
CS11_ - Flooding
CS12_ - Biodiversity
CS13_ - Supporting access to new development
CS17_ - Infrastructure and developer contributions
CS18_ - Urban design, town character, historic environment
CS19_ - Community safety
CS24 – Affordable Housing
CS27_ - Sustainable economy
CS28_ - Employment sites

Other Planning Documents

National Planning Policy Framework
Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Relevant Planning History

95/00150/NF - Alterations to ground level. 2 buildings for Royal Mail: B8, 8330.5 sq. m & B2, 1014.5 sq. m. Staff parking for 154 cars, 40 motorcycles & 75 cycles, servicing & circulation areas, ancillary facilities, fence & landscaping. (Amended plans): Approved

Public Consultation

Statutory Consultee

- Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority: No objection subject to conditions requiring a construction traffic management plan (CTMP); travel plan; details of access arrangements; servicing and delivery management plan; detailed parking plan and restriction on parking use; drainage scheme.
- Thames Water Utilities Limited
A condition should be imposed seeking details of the drainage strategy for the development

Third Parties

29, 53 Manor House, Bennett Crescent; 10 Fern Hill Road; Flat 15, 1 Trinity Street

Individual Comments:

The main points raised were:

- In principle in favour of the site being redeveloped as there is no benefit in having an empty building and the car park looks derelict
- Against the demolition of the existing Royal Mail Building, as there are concerns the replacement buildings will cause noise and intrusion (loss of privacy, loss of light) to the Fernhill Road properties
- The Heritage Assessment is incorrect to suggest that the immediate vicinity is industrial in character when it is in fact residential
- The Grade II Listed Buildings of the Nuffield Press East Wing and former school house are directly opposite on Hollow Way require any development to sympathetic and ideally use traditional brick or stone construction
- The Heritage Assessment also has the wrong date for the current building (it is a late 1990s). The fact the area was previously more industrial is irrelevant. It was once arable farmland but that doesn't mean any new building should look like a barn.
- This end of the Business Park is surrounded on three sides by residential properties therefore it should be at least as sympathetic in character to the residential housing as the rest of the site. It deserves a building of high architectural merit such as the Manches solicitors building, rather than giant shed-like industrial units.
- The local area needs office blocks, not semi-industrial units with loading bays for articulated lorries. Such low value premises are plentiful outside the ring road such as the Pony Road Horspath industrial estate.
- Units 4 thru 8 will occupy land that is currently designated as car parking. The position is unsightly and much closer and highly visible from windows on the east facing side of Manor House, Military College, and Morris House.
- The units should be sited further back from the Garsington Road with the provision open space and the service yards and car parking shifted to the land adjacent to the Garsington Road.
- The position of Units 1 and 2 occupy a similar footprint to the current building so do not pose the same intrusion
- There is a concern about the impact from demolition and construction noise. This should only take place between 8 and 6pm
- The area is surrounded by residential dwellings and should be kept to that character instead of increasing to traffic congestion through central Oxford routes as workers will need to commute to this central area.
- The site should be used for housing to alleviate the housing shortage in Oxford

Pre-Application Discussions / Oxford Design Review Panel

The applicant has undertaken pre-application discussions with Oxford City council, Oxfordshire County Council, and Ward Members.

The scheme has been reviewed by the Oxford Design Review Panel on the 20th November 2015. A copy of their response is included within **appendix 2** of this report

Officers Assessment:

Background to Proposals

1. The application site is located in the north-western corner of the Oxford Business Park which was formed from the former Cowley Motor Works. The site would be bordered by the residential properties of Hollow Way and Fern Hill Road to the north; to the west by Hollow Way and the residential properties contained within the Listed Buildings of the former Nuffield Press buildings beyond; Garsington Road (B480) lies to the south; and the rest of the Oxford Business Park to the east (**appendix 1**)
2. The site has an area of 2.7ha and comprises the former Royal Mail Sorting Office (8,163.5m²) which is currently vacant, and the Royal Mail Vehicle Maintenance Depot (850.45m²) which is to close in July 2016. The site is accessed via Alec Issigonis Way, which is the main road on the northern part of the Business Park and links to the Garsington Road.
3. The sorting office is sited on the western boundary to Hollow Way and has a service area to the north, and east, and a car park to the south. The maintenance depot is sited alongside the Garsington Road and has a service area to the south and a parking area to the north.
4. The application is seeking planning permission for the demolition of the existing sorting office and vehicle maintenance depot and the erection of 8 units which would provide 12,588m² of employment floor space which would be used for light industrial (B1(c)), general industrial (B2) and storage and distribution (B8) and associated development. Each unit would have 10% of the floorspace allocated as ancillary office space, and some units will have ancillary trade counters provided.
5. The units would be laid out around a central open service yard / car parking area in order to make best use of the access from Alec Issigonis Way. A total of 108 car parking spaces (15 accessible spaces) and a total of 80 cycle spaces are to be provided.
6. Officers consider the principal determining issues to be:
 - principle of development
 - employment use
 - affordable housing
 - site layout and built forms
 - impact upon adjoining properties
 - transport
 - landscaping
 - flood risk and drainage
 - biodiversity
 - noise
 - sustainability
 - archaeology

- air quality
- land contamination
- community infrastructure

Principle of Development

7. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS2 encourages development proposals to make an efficient and appropriate use of previously developed land in a manner that suits the sites capacity.
8. The NPPF also seeks to promote sustainable development and identifies three roles which the planning system needs to achieve this; economic, social, and environmental. The economic role is defined as ‘contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation’.
9. The existing sorting office has been on the market in its present form for considerable time but has so far received little interest. The redevelopment of the site and its configuration to provide a range of different sized units would make a better and more efficient use of this site and as such represents sustainable development in accordance with the aims of the above-mentioned policies.

Employment Use

10. The Oxford Core Strategy sets out Oxford's employment strategy to promote a policy of ‘managed economic growth’. This seeks to secure the long-term future of its key sectors, whilst taking account of land supply constraints, and the need to improve the balance between jobs and housing supply. Policy CS27 therefore promotes the support of Oxford's key employment sectors and clusters, whilst maintaining the necessary infrastructure in order to establish a sustainable economy. It requires proposals to show how they maintain, strengthen, modernise or diversify Oxford's economy.
11. The existing supply of employment sites is safeguarded through the application of Policy CS28, which aims to resist the loss of key protected employment sites, such as the Oxford Business Park. This policy recognises that these sites ensure a sustainable distribution of business premises and employment land to maintain a range of potential job opportunities throughout Oxford and therefore will resist any proposals that result in their loss.
12. The existing sorting office is vacant and has been marketed for alternative uses for 7 years without a suitable occupant found to bring the building back into employment use. The bespoke nature of a building designed specifically as a sorting office has had an impact on finding a viable use for the building. It is therefore considered that the redevelopment of the site to provide a range of smaller and medium sized units to service the local and regional market is the best option to bring this back into employment use.

13. In economic terms the proposed development would have the positive benefits of increasing the amount of floorspace on the site by 3,000m² to 12,500m² together with providing a greater range and mix of different sizes of buildings and creating 217 jobs representing 92 more jobs than the sorting office and maintenance depot combined. Socially this has the potential of increasing the job opportunities for local people, with the potential to support a further 79 additional jobs in the wider community. The proposed B1 (c), B2, and B8 uses would also be considered appropriate for the site.
14. As such officers consider that the proposal redevelopment would achieve 'managed economic growth' and would positively 'strengthen and modernise' Oxford's economy in accordance with Policy CS27. It would also meet the criterion set out within Policy CS28 for the modernisation and regeneration of a key protected employment site.

Affordable Housing

15. Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy and the Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations SPD recognises that commercial development can put pressure on the housing market in Oxford by encouraging new employees to move to Oxford who may otherwise have not done so.
16. This site would be a qualifying site for such provision. The Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD set the mechanisms for seeking such a contribution, which in this case would be £156,582 based on the level of development proposed. This would need to be secured through a legal agreement.

Site Layout and Built Form

17. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires development to demonstrate high-quality urban design that responds appropriately to the site and surroundings; creates a strong sense of place; attractive public realm; and high quality architecture. The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 requires development to enhance the quality of the environment, with Policy CP1 central to this purpose. Policy CP6 emphasises the need to make an efficient use of land, in a manner where the built form and site layout suits the sites capacity and surrounding area. Policy CP8 states that the siting, massing, and design of new development should create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the surrounding area.
18. The existing sorting office is a large brick built unit that covers a significant extent of the site alongside the western and northern boundary. The maintenance depot is of similar form but smaller in scale. There would be no objection to their loss.
19. Layout: The proposal would reorganise the site, replacing the large sorting office and smaller depot with 8 units of varying size arranged around a central courtyard which is accessed from Alec Issigonis Way. The location of the units alongside the northern boundary helps to provide a barrier to the adjoining residential properties from potential noise from the service yard. The larger unit (1) is positioned within the site so as to limit the impact on the surrounding area, and

the smaller units positioned around Hollow Way and Garsington Road with gaps between buildings to soften the edge to the site. The 5m landscaped buffer on the edge of the business park is to remain. The layout would represent an appropriate and efficient means of organising the site.

20. Size and Massing: The existing sorting office is a dominant structure within the site, and the proposal would reduce the visual impact of this mass by spreading the built form across 5 separate footprints and enabling gaps between buildings and provision of additional landscaping around the boundary to help integrate the buildings into their setting. The overall height of the buildings would be similar to that of the existing sorting office. The size and massing of the buildings would be considered appropriate in the context of the business park.
21. Appearance: The buildings have been designed to have a contemporary appearance and utilising more modern materials to those within the sorting office. The scheme has evolved since it was originally submitted and replaced what were unimaginative industrial sheds, with buildings that have attempted to reduce the industrial appearance of the structures in order to enable them to relate well with the local street scene, and adjoining buildings in the Business Park.
22. During the consultation process, concerns have been raised that the development does not consider the potential impact upon the former Nuffield Press buildings on the western side of Hollow Way which are Grade II Listed Buildings. With regards to these listed buildings, it is important to recognise that the site is not within a wholly residential area. The area has always had an industrial character with the former Cowley works and Nuffield Press buildings dominating this part of Cowley and to which the residential properties were added in order to provide housing for the workers. This commercial nature was continued with the creation of the Oxford Business Park. As stated in the Heritage Assessment submitted with the application, the juxtaposition of large scale industrial buildings with the buildings on the Nuffield Press site and residential properties is well established in this area. The proposed buildings although of a more contemporary nature would reflect the established 'industrial' character of this part of Hollow Way and Garsington Road and would therefore not harm the significance of these adjacent listed buildings.
23. Therefore officers consider that the overall size, scale, design and siting of the proposed development would suit the sites capacity and the character and appearance of the Business Park in accordance with the above-mentioned policies.

Impact on Adjoining Properties

24. Policy CP10 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to be sited in a manner which meets functional need, but also in a manner that safeguards the amenities of other properties.
25. The existing sorting office is a large building that is sited on the boundary with Hollow Way and Fern Hill Road and therefore already has some impact on adjoining properties to varying extents. The residential properties on Fern Hill

Road, Garsington Road, and Hollow way would stand to be the most affected by the proposal.

26. With regards to the residential properties of Hollow Way and Fern Hill Road that lie to the north of the site. The existing building has an overall height of 11.13m and is set away 18m away from the northern boundary with the rear wall covering approximately 68m. These adjoining properties are set approximately 1.5m above the site ground level, and have 2m boundary fences at the rear gardens and a significant amount of mature boundary screening. The rear gardens of the Fern Hill Road properties are 30m in length and terminate at the northern boundary whereas the properties on Hollow Way run parallel to the northern boundary. The proposed units would be of a similar height to the existing building, with Unit 1 being set 10m from the rear boundary and Unit 2 maintaining the existing separation distance. Having regards to the separation distance between the proposed building and the Fern Hill Road properties, the change in land level and height of the proposed buildings, officers consider that the siting of Unit 1 would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenities of these adjoining properties in terms of loss of light, outlook, and overbearing impact. The siting and height of Unit 2 would be the same as existing so as not to alter the existing relationship between the built form on site and the respective properties on Hollow Way and Fern Hill Road.
27. With regards to the properties on the western side of Hollow Way, the existing sorting office already extends a significant proportion (112m) of the western boundary of the site. The proposed development would reduce the extent of built form on this boundary with the provision of the central service yard. In terms of impact, Unit 2 would maintain the same separation distance to the properties on the opposite side of Hollow Way as existing, but would only extend half the distance (54m). Unit 8 would be located at the south-western corner and would be 26m from the façade from the closest properties to the west. As such there would be no impact upon these Hollow Way properties from Units 2 and 8 in terms of loss of light, outlook, and overbearing impact and in actual fact there may be a marginal improvement beyond the existing situation caused by the sorting office.
28. Finally the dwellings on the southern side of Garsington Road are set some 32m away from Units 3-8. The separation distance and orientation of these properties to the site would mean that the development would also not have an adverse impact in terms of loss of light, outlook, and overbearing impact.

Transport

29. A Transport Statement has been submitted to consider the highway impact of the development. An addendum to this statement has subsequently been submitted in order to provide more information on the likely trip generation from the range of B1, B2, and B8 uses that could operate on site. It has also provided further information on access arrangements and car parking.
30. Traffic Generation: The addendum has provided further information on the trip generation for a development which could have a range of B1, B2, and B8 uses

on site. The addendum has now assessed the 'worse case' scenario in terms of the traffic generation from the existing use and proposed use (i.e. parcel distribution). The assessment confirms that the development will generate a slight increase in traffic on the surrounding highway network of an additional 15 vehicles in the AM peak and 22 vehicles in the PM peak in a 'worse case' scenario.

31. The Local Highways have not raised an objection to the proposal in terms of traffic generation but have indicated that the surrounding road network is already sensitive to any increase in traffic. In order to deal with this matter, a Section 278 contribution of £18,000 towards 'future' highway improvements along the Garsington Road corridor. This is to directly mitigate the traffic impact of the development to provide additional highway capacity, bus priority and cycle and pedestrian measures along Garsington Road. The applicant has agreed to enter into such an agreement with the county council, however, officers would advise members that this is a matter between the applicant and county council and is not a matter for members to consider as part of the recommendation.
32. Access: The proposed development will utilise the existing vehicular access to the sorting office from Alec Issigonis Way for all units apart from Unit 3 which will be served by a reconfiguring the existing access to Alec Issigonis Way for the maintenance depot.
33. The transport assessment has provided swept path analysis for HGVs and Fire Tenders accessing, parking, turning and manoeuvring within the site. A condition should be attached which requires the submission of the design details of the accesses to the site. A condition should also be imposed for a service and delivery management plan to be provided for the site.
34. The pedestrian and cycle access to the site will also be taken from Alec Issigonis Way with no links provided through the Garsington Road and Hollow Way boundaries. The provision of pedestrian and cycle routes through these boundaries would allow greater permeability through the site to the bus stops and cycle routes that are located on Hollow Way and Garsington Road which would benefit the scheme. The provision of such links has been encouraged by officers and the Oxford Design Review Panel, however, the applicant has indicated that there is a legal agreement which prohibits cross over rights for the applicant over the strip of land surrounding the boundary. This has an impact on their ability to provide a pedestrian and cycle access over this land. There is currently a pedestrian access onto Hollow Way, but it is understood that the right to use this as a pedestrian access has been removed. It is disappointing that the applicant has not been able to agree the creation of a pedestrian access through to Garsington Road and Hollow Way with the management company for the business park. However, officers accept that providing such a link is not within the control of the applicant and therefore this could not be secured by way of legal agreement or condition. The layout of the scheme would allow for links to be created in the future (particularly to Hollow Way) and therefore an informative should be added to encourage the applicant to discuss the matter further with the management company.

35. Car Parking: The existing sorting office and depot had a total of 162 parking spaces (151 for the sorting office and 11 for the depot), and the proposed layout has been amended to provide 95 car parking spaces (including 15 accessible spaces) across the site.
36. The existing sorting office and depot currently has a total of 162 parking spaces, with 151 for the sorting office and 11 for the depot. The proposed layout has been amended since it was originally submitted to provide 95 car parking spaces (including 15 accessible spaces) which would result in an overall reduction on site of 67 spaces.
37. The parking provision would exceed the maximum local plan parking standards required for the proposed range of uses by 9 spaces. Although the reduction in parking from the existing situation is welcome, it is not acceptable to have a level of car parking provision above the maximum standard especially given the surrounding road network is sensitive to increase in traffic. As such officers suggest that a condition should be imposed to ensure that the parking provision for the scheme is reduced to the maximum parking standard.
38. Cycle Parking: The proposal would provide 80 cycle spaces which would exceed the minimum local plan standards. This Transport Addendum confirms that the cycle parking will be in secure, well-lit enclosed covered stores alongside staff entrances which are overlooked. The details of the stores and their locations would be acceptable and should be secured by condition.
39. Travel Plan: The Local Plan requires travel plans for all major developments that comprise employment which will generate significant amounts of travel. As the Garsington Road is sensitive to increases in traffic, it is essential that the impact of this development on the adjoining road network at peak times is minimised through a Travel plan which limits the number of cars which access the site at peak times.
40. A framework travel plan will be required which sets the blueprint for the subsequent travel plans for all future site occupiers whose premises will all qualify for the provision of a travel plan. This should be secured by condition

Landscaping

41. The car park to the south of the sorting office includes a good provision of high quality early mature landscape trees, which were evidently planted as part of the original development of the site. The southern boundary is further screened by more semi-mature specimen tree groups, including red oaks, cherries and black pines on either side of the sites boundary (there being a wide verge along the Garsington Road). The western boundary of the site is close to Hollow Way but there is quite dense shrub and tree planting along the outside of this boundary line, which acts to screen or at least soften the massing of the metal elevation of the existing unit; the vegetation includes western red cedar, whitebeams, cherries and one black pine at the northern end. The northern boundary is planted up with black pines and red oaks, which together create a sense of site enclosure and help to soften views from the rear gardens of Fern Hill Road to the north.

42. The application includes a tree report that incorporates an Arboricultural Impact Appraisal, and identifies that the development will require the removal/loss of 46 individual trees and the partial loss of one tree group; approximately half the sites existing tree population. This includes 20 individual B (Moderate) Category trees, 25 C (Low) Category trees and one U (remove irrespective of development) Category tree (assessed according to the quality criteria of BS.5837:2012-Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction). Most of the proposed tree removals are located within narrow planting strips within the existing parking bay areas to the south of the site; the presence of other trees along the southern boundary implies that the loss of these trees (which are all less than 9m tall) will have a negligible impact on the street-scene of the Garsington Road. The service yard at the eastern side of the site will involve the loss of 12 trees (including 5 B Category oaks and pines). These trees enhance the landscape quality of Alec Issigonis Way and this will be the most significant landscape impact, although the trees have no wider landscape significance beyond the business park.
43. The tree losses associated with this proposed development are therefore considered acceptable subject to satisfactory replacement as part of a new strategic landscaping scheme secured under planning conditions. However, because there will be less scope for new planting at the eastern boundary with Alec Issigonis Way, there will be a moderate residual deterioration in the landscape quality of the business park in the immediate vicinity. The important tree belts ranging along the western and northern boundaries are shown retained and the new build footprints do not imply any difficulty in achieving this objective, providing that appropriate tree protection measures, secured under planning conditions, are implemented.
44. The proposed application scheme will result in the loss of 46 individual trees and the partial loss of one tree group. Despite these relatively large numbers, as all the removals relate to semi-mature trees no greater than 10m height, this impact would have no significant harmful impact on public visual amenity. The development provides limited opportunities for new tree planting, but careful landscape design implemented to a high standard could enhance the quality of proposed new development and its interface with the business park. The application is considered acceptable in relation to Oxford Local Plan Policies CS18, CP1, CP11 and NE15 relating to trees and good landscape design, subject to conditions for tree protection measures and landscaping proposals and landscape management plan.

Flood Risk and Drainage

45. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been submitted with the application which has demonstrated that the existing surface water run-off rates and volumes can be reduced by providing on site attenuation.
46. The Flood Risk Assessment has been revised to demonstrate that a feasible drainage scheme could be implemented using appropriate sustainable urban drainage techniques should infiltration solutions not be feasible once infiltration testing has been carried out prior to the development of the site. The infiltration

tests are to be carried out prior to the commencement of development and infiltration implemented should it be feasible to reduce run-off rates and volumes from the development site, reducing the pressure on the existing surface water drainage infrastructure and contribute towards an improvement to downstream flood risk.

47. As such officers would raise no objections to the proposal on flood risk and drainage grounds on the basis that the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the revised flood risk assessment and the detailed design of the drainage regime is agreed. These matters could be dealt with by condition.

Ecology

48. An extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey has been submitted. The site is covered in large areas of hardstanding which is of poor biodiversity value. The survey identified very limited opportunities for bats on site and the buildings are generally considered to have negligible or low potential to support bats and are unlikely to support maternity roosts. Having regards to the location of the site and the lack of good links to foraging habitat officers are content with this assessment and satisfied that bats are unlikely to be impacted. In this instance it is considered that there is not sufficient reasonable likelihood of bats roosting within the development. However the presence of bats cannot be discounted entirely and a small risk remains. In order to account for this it is recommended that an informative is attached to the decision so that the applicant can take appropriate measures should they or evidence of their presence be discovered during the demolition of the building.

49. In line with good practice and governmental policy on biodiversity and sustainability (National Planning Policy Framework 2012 & NERC 2006), all practical opportunities should be taken to harmonise the built development with the needs of wildlife. The NPPF seeks to provide a net enhancement to biodiversity through sustainable development and policy CS12 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 states that opportunities will be taken to ensure the inclusion of features beneficial to biodiversity within new developments throughout Oxford.

50. In this instance it is appropriate for provisions for wildlife to be built into the development. Certain bat and bird species are urban biodiversity priority species almost entirely dependent on exploiting human habitation for roosting. The biodiversity enhancements should follow the recommendations set out in Table 4 of Extended Phase 1 Survey including provision of Swift, starling and house sparrow boxes. The location and model of the tubes should be clearly marked on plans and secured by condition.

Noise

51. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application. This identifies that the key noise sources associated with the development will be HGV movements, loading activities, and mechanical plant. The assessment has determined that during the daytime period, using a worse-case scenario of all

HGV bays being used, the noise generated by the operation of the site would be below the daily background noise levels. At night, the predicted internal noise level in adjacent residential properties has also been found to be acceptable.

52. Having reviewed the assessment officers consider that the proposed development is unlikely to have an adverse impact on nearest noise sensitive receptors. The assessment has not included details of mechanical plant for the units, and therefore a condition should be attached which requires any air conditioning, mechanical ventilation or associated plant to be designed to meet the requirements of BS4142:14 to ensure residual value does not rise above measured background level.

Sustainability

53. The site would be a qualifying site for a Natural Resource Impact Analysis under Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS9 as the floor area exceeds 2,000m². The application includes an energy statement and NRIA setting out the schemes approach to energy efficiency. The NRIA scores 8/11 which would exceed the minimum requirements. The layout has been designed to maximise solar gain, whilst the form of the buildings make them more efficient as they require less insulation to reduce heat loss and achieve greater performance. The insulation, rooflights, and windows will be designed to meet Building Regulations Part L requirements. The scheme will employ solar PV and air source heat pumps to make use of renewable sources on-site.

54. Having reviewed these documents, officers consider that they would incorporate measures to optimise energy efficiency within the building in accordance with the requirements of these policies. A condition should be imposed to ensure that the recommendations of the Energy Strategy are carried out.

Archaeology

55. This site is of interest because it is located within a dispersed landscape of Roman pottery manufacturing activity and close to the Historic core of Temple Cowley village. However the Cotswold Archaeology Heritage Assessment concludes that "It would thus be expected that any potential archaeological remains that may have been in the site would have been severely truncated or removed due to these [previous] phases of use; and that the potential for significant archaeological remains must be very limited." In this case, bearing in mind the site land use history and the results of the archaeological desk based assessment officers consider that the scheme would be unlikely to have significant archaeological implications.

Contaminated Land

56. A phase 1 Environmental Impact Assessment has been included with the application. The historical land use of this site was as the Oxford Military College, Motor Works, and most recently as a Royal Mail sorting office and vehicle maintenance depot. The Phase 1 report recommends further investigation in the event of groundworks on this site. The site is currently covered in hardstanding.

The groundworks set out in the Construction Management Plan (CMP) include the demolition of the existing buildings and break up and removal of the hardstanding on site with subsequent resurfacing with tarmac in parking areas and erection of 8 commercial/industrial units. The perimeter is proposed to be landscaped.

57. A phased risk assessment would identify any risks to sensitive receptors, including neighbouring residential properties and buried services, and whether the consideration of porous paving is suitable on site as a SUDs measure, as stated in the Flood Risk Assessment. This should also identify any mitigation measure necessary during the construction phase, and any need for remediation on site.

58. The CMP states that any potential contaminated soils encountered will be removed and disposed of offsite. The construction mitigation measures in section 5 of the CMP states that a Site Waste Management Plan will be developed.

Air Quality

59. The Air Quality Assessment submitted with the application considers potential impacts on air quality during both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. The modelling indicated that pollution levels at the development were below the relevant air quality standards and, as such, the location is considered suitable for its end use without the inclusion of mitigation methods. Additionally, the assessment concluded that impacts on pollutant levels as a result of operational phase vehicle exhaust emissions were not predicted to be significant at any sensitive location in the vicinity of the site. Based on the assessment results, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on air quality issues.

60. A key theme of the National Planning Policy Framework is that development should enable future occupiers to make “green” vehicle choices and “incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emissions vehicles” (paragraph 35). Oxford City Council’s Air Quality Action Plan 2013 commits to seeking to ensure that new developments make appropriate provision for walking, cycling, public transport and low emission vehicle infrastructure e.g. Electric Vehicle charging points.

61. As a minimum requirement, new development schemes should include the provision of electric vehicle recharging provision and any mitigation requirements arising from the exposure assessment, where applicable. To prepare for increased demand in future years, appropriate cable provision should be included in the scheme design and development. The recommended provision rate is at least 1 Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point per 1000m² of commercial floorspace, which in the case of this proposal would equate to 13 charging points. This should be included by condition

Community Infrastructure Levy

62. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a standard charge on new

development. The amount of CIL payable is calculated on the basis of the amount of floor space created by a development and applies to developments of 100 square metres or more. Based on the floor area of the proposed development the proposal will be liable for a CIL payment of £271,498.32.

Conclusion:

63. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and National Planning Policy Framework and therefore officer's recommendation to the Members of the East Area Planning Committee is to approve the development in principle, but defer the application for the completion of a legal agreement to secure the necessary financial contributions as set out above.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Contact Officer: Andrew Murdoch

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Date: 8th July 2016