

WEST AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

11th September 2018

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|----------------------------|--|-------------------|------------------|
| Application number: | 18/01856/CT3 | | |
| Decision due by | 10th September 2018 | | |
| Extension of time | 18th September 2018 | | |
| Proposal | Change of use of job centre with ancillary offices (Use Class Sui Generis) to Offices (Use Class B1). (Additional information) | | |
| Site address | Government Building, Floyds Row, Oxford, Oxfordshire – see Appendix 1 for site plan | | |
| Ward | Holywell Ward | | |
| Case officer | Julia Drzewicka | | |
| Agent: | Mrs Julia Castle | Applicant: | Mrs Julia Castle |
| Reason at Committee | Oxford City Council is the applicant. | | |

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1. West Area Planning Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1.1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of this report and grant planning permission
- 1.1.2. **agree to delegate authority** to the Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services to:
- finalise the recommended conditions as set out in this report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1. This report considers the change of use from job centre with ancillary offices (Use Class Sui Generis) to Offices (Use Class B1). The building is located within the Central Conservation Area. The access to the site is via Floyds Row, which is just off St Aldates. No changes to the external appearance of the building are being proposed.

3. LEGAL AGREEMENT

3.1. There is no requirement for a legal agreement with this application.

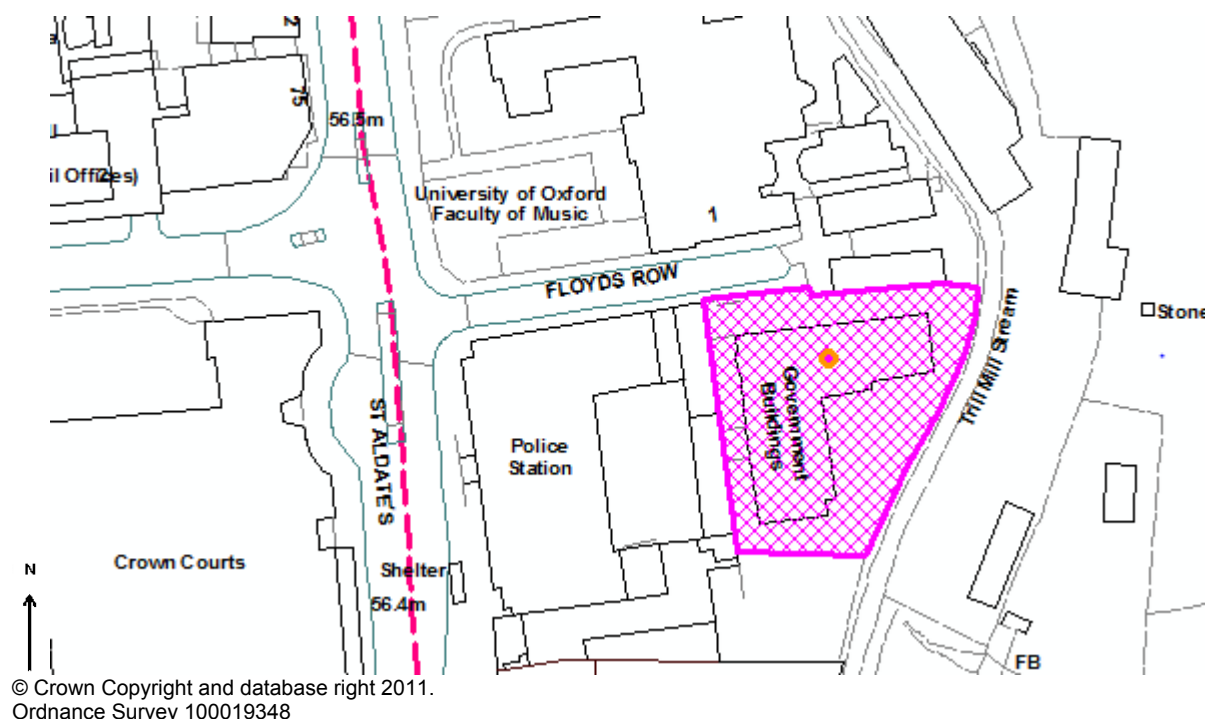
4. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

4.1. The proposal is not liable for CIL.

5. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

5.1. The site is located within the Central Conservation Area. The building is a part two, part single storey detached L-shaped property, located off St Aldates. The site is adjacent to Christ Church College, St Aldates Police Station and the University of Oxford Faculty of Music. The building is finished in a stone and slate roof. The site benefits from off-street parking and a barrier entrance system.

5.2. See block plan below:



6. PROPOSAL

6.1. The application proposes change of use from a job centre with ancillary offices (Use Class Sui Generis) to Offices (Use Class B1).

7. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

7.1. The table below sets out the relevant planning history for the application site:

64/15648/A_H - Extensions to Coroners Court. PER 27th October 1964.

66/17582/A_H - Demolition of air raid shelter erection of garage. PER 10th May 1966.

75/00939/C_H - Re-arrangement of car parking to provide 25 parking spaces

and extension of existing cycle shed to form paper store, new fence and exit gates.. PER 3rd December 1975.

94/01206/CFH - Single storey extension to provide link corridor on south and east elevations (Amended Plan). RNO 31st October 1994.

95/01406/NFH - Erection of 3 lamp posts, and external lights on all elevations.. PER 9th November 1995.

8. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

8.1. The following policies are relevant to the application:

| Topic | National Planning Policy Framework | Local Plan | Core Strategy |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Design | 124-132 | CP1 CP6 CP9 CP10 | CS18 |
| Conservation/ Heritage | 184-202 | HE7 | |
| Commercial | 80-82 | | CS27, CS28 |
| Transport | 102-111 | TR3, TR11, TR12 | |
| Environmental | 117-121 | CP19 CP21 | |
| Miscellaneous | 7-12 | CP.13 | |

9. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

9.1. Site notices were displayed around the application site on 30th July 2018 and an advertisement was published in The Oxford Times newspaper on 26th July 2018.

Statutory and non-statutory consultees

Oxfordshire County Council (Highways)

9.2. It is noted that there is adequate car parking provision within the site to serve the development. However, the level of cycle parking is below that, which would normally be required. Therefore, provided that the details for cycle storage are

made conditional to the planning consent, an objection in relation to the highway and transportation aspect of the development is not raised in this instance.

Public representations

9.3. No comments received.

10. PLANNING MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

10.1. Officers consider the determining issues to be:

- Principle of development
- Transport

a. Principle of development

- 10.2. Planning policy CS28 of the Core strategy states that planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of key protected employment sites. The application site is not a protected employment site and therefore the proposal complies with this requirement. Policy CS28 also states that planning permission will only be granted for the modernisation and regeneration of any employment site if it can be demonstrated that new development secures or creates employment important to Oxford's local workforce, allows for higher- density development that seeks to make the best and most efficient use of land and does not cause unacceptable environmental intrusion or nuisance.
- 10.3. The preamble to policy CS28 states that for the purposes of Policy CS28, the term employment sites refers only to land and premises in Class B or closely related Sui Generis uses, such as buildings yards; transport operators; local depots; and retail warehouse clubs. The existing use and the layout of the building are unusual in its nature the previous use was a job centre with ancillary offices. The statement submitted with the application states that the building had been leased to the Department of Works and Pensions for over 50 years. Since 2011 the use has been reduced as the job centre was transferred into a different location in the city centre (7 Worcester Street).
- 10.4. The existing ground floor plan shows interview cubicles, reception and waiting areas, plant room and lifts. The existing first floor is more typical office space with staff rooms, office rooms and common rooms. Due to the existing lift, it is considered that the building would be accessible to those with reduced mobility.
- 10.5. The proposed ground floor plans shows an open plan office space and smaller offices. It is considered that the proposed modernisation would allow a better use of this space and allow a higher-density development. The application form states that the number of full-time employees is proposed to be 35. The additional statement states that if the ground floor consulting rooms are removed and open plan offices are created then new work stations for approximately 40-50 people could be created. It is considered that the density

of 30-50 employees is acceptable and it would provide a good use of the space available in the city centre and it will retain the employment on the site. On the basis that the development would make more efficient use of land the development would be supported in principle by the requirements of Policy CP6 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

- 10.6. It is not known at this stage who would occupy the property however the applicant states that the current enquires show interests to be broadly from currently expanding local businesses.
- 10.7. Due to the existing use and lack of external alterations, it is considered that the proposed change of use would not have an unacceptable impact in terms of nuisance and environmental intrusion.
- 10.8. It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and it complies with Policy CS28. The lack of external changes and the suitability of the use proposed means that the development would not have a harmful impact on Central Conservation Area in terms of its character, appearance and special significance; as a result the development complies with the requirements of Policy HE7 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and Paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

b. Transport

- 10.9. Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will only be granted for development that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport.

Car parking

- 10.10. Policy TR11 of the Oxford Local Plan states that the City Council will not allow any significant increase in the overall number of parking spaces in the Transport Central Area, and will maintain approximately the present number of public off-street parking spaces. Policy TR12 of the Oxford Local Plan states that when determining planning applications, the City Council will seek to reduce the number of private non-residential parking spaces, particularly in the Transport Central Area and Transport District Areas, when they are not required for operational reasons.
- 10.11. The site is located within Central Transport Area. The submitted site location plan & block plan shows 20 car parking spaces plus 2 disabled car parking spaces at the front of the building, which is considered to be sufficient taking into consideration the location of the site. Access to the site will remain as existing, via a vehicle crossover along the adjacent highway. The Highways Authority commented on the proposal and they stated that there is adequate car parking provision within the site to serve the development. Furthermore the site is located in a sustainable location, within close proximity to city centre and excellent public transport services. The proposed development complies with policy TR3, TR11 and TR12 of the Oxford Local Plan.

Cycle parking

10.12. Policy TR4 of the Oxford Local Plan states that the City Council will only grant planning permission for development that: a) provides good access and facilities for pedestrians and for cyclists, and b) complies with the minimum cycle parking standards. The cycle parking standard for Businesses (B1) is 1 space per 90m² or 1 space per 5 staff (or other people). The application form states that there will be approximately 35 employees and therefore to comply with the requirements of policy TR4 7 cycle spaces have to be provided. The submitted plan shows the location of the bike stand at the rear of the building, which is considered to be acceptable. The proposed development provides 5 bike stands which is below the standards and therefore a condition is recommended to be imposed to ensure that at least 7 "Sheffield" type cycle parking stands, secured and undercover are provided within the boundary of the site and thereafter maintained and retained at all times for the use of the development. The condition is recommended to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport to and from the site and to provide adequate cycle parking facilities in accordance with Policy TR4 of the Oxford Local Plan.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1. The proposed change of use complies with the relevant policies. The proposed development provides office spaces within the city centre. The site is situated in a sustainable location. The proposal is not considered to have an adverse detrimental impact on the surrounding environment or adjoining buildings.
- 11.2. It is recommended that the Committee resolve to grant planning permission for the development proposed subject to conditions.

12. CONDITIONS

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development permitted shall be constructed in complete accordance with the specifications in the application and approved plans listed below, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To avoid doubt and to ensure an acceptable development as indicated on the submitted drawings in accordance with policy CP1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

- 3 Prior to the occupation of the approved development, a detailed scheme showing the design of a secure, covered cycle store for at least 7 "Sheffield" type cycle parking stands, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved cycle store shall be installed prior to first occupation.

Reason: To encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport to and from the site and to provide adequate cycle parking facilities in accordance with Policy TR.4 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

- 4 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2 Part 3 no change of use from the approved development shall be permitted without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the Local Planning Authority can properly consider any alternative use of the premises and to ensure that there is no long term loss of office space within the City in accordance with policy CS28 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

13. APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1** – Site location plan

14. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998

- 14.1. Officers have considered the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to approve this application. They consider that the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8/Article 1 of Protocol 1 is justifiable and proportionate for the protection of the rights and freedom of others or the control of his/her property in this way is in accordance with the general interest.

15. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

- 15.1. 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.

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